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THE PATHFINDER,

A JOURNAL

OF

PURE THEISM AND RELIGIOUS
FREETHOUGHT.

CONDUCTED BY

P. W. PERFITT.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Ancient Egyptian Papyri	135
"Ancient Egyptians," Wilkinson's	323
Atonement, Theories of the	329, 362, 398, 402
A Word on Modern Civilization	317
Burning the Steppes of Southern Russia	281
Character, Formation of	246
Characteristics of the Reformation:—	
XXVI. A New Era	8
XXVII. John Huss	26
XXVIII. Bohemia in Revolt	42
XXIX. The Council of Constance	58
XXX. Martyrdom for the Truth	74
XXXI. The Hussite War	90
XXXII. The "Unknown Heroes" of the Reformation	106
XXXIII. John of Goch	122
XXXIV. Gregory of Heimburg and Jacob of Jüterbock	138
XXXV. John of Wesalia	154
XXXVI. Thomas à Kempis	170
XXXVII. The "Imitatio Christi"	186
XXXVIII. Estimate of a Kempis's Teaching	202
XXXIX. The German Mystics	215
XL. Savonarola	225
XLI. The Voice of Reform in Italy	242
XLII. Savonarola and the Florentine Revolution	260
XLIII. The Beginning of the End	277
XLIV. The Final Issue	291
XLV. "Evangelical" Theories and Parodies of History	308

	PAGE
XLVI. The Revival of Learning and Literature	319
XLVII. Spread of Light and Knowledge	340
XLVIII. Influence of the Platonic Philosophy	356
XLIX. Footholds of Priestcraft	370
L. Conclusional	389
Chinese Physic and Physicians	311
Christna, the Transfiguration of	183
Civilization, A Word on Modern	317
Crucifixion, The, and the Two Thieves	276
Elijah, Life and Character of	14, 30, 46, 62, 77, 93, 109, 189, 205
Essays and Reviews and the "Noble Earl"	301
Female Life in the Early Christian Times	120
Formation of Character	246
Hindoo Teachers	264
Jesus and the Last Passover	249, 265, 282, 296
Jewish Race, The	313
Job, the Book of	219, 232
Joseph Barker and the Secularists	305
Lectures at the Free Church:—	
Jesus Keeping the Last Passover	249, 265, 282, 296
Theories of the Atonement	329, 362, 393, 402
Lectures at South Place Chapel:—	
The Life and Character of Elijah	14, 30, 46, 62, 77, 93, 109, 189, 205
Miracle, Nature of a	11, 126, 141, 158, 173
Moral Perfection	199

	PAGE		PAGE
Out of the Cloud. A Tale:—		Purana, The Bassava -	228
Chap. VII. After -dinner Chat		Reformation, Characteristics of the	8,
about the Clergy -	1	26, 42, 58, 74, 90, 106, 122, 138,	
" VIII. The Old Town of		154, 170, 186, 202, 215, 225, 242,	
Crosswood -	17	260, 277, 291, 308, 319, 340, 356,	
" IX. The Poinders at home	33	370, 389	
" X. The Dorcas Society -	49	Religion and Reliance on Self -	398
" XI. The Crosswood Bible		Roman Church, The -	221
Society -	65	Septuagint, The -	346
" XII. The Crosswood Fo-		Sikhs, Manners and Customs of the	
reign Policy -	81	326, 344, 360, 391	
" XIII. Beer, Piety, and		Street Teachers -	294
Scandal at the "Fly-		The Bassava Purana -	228
ing Dutchman" -	97	The Book of Job -	219, 232
" XIV. A Talk about the Cler-		The Brighton Accident and Pro-	
gy and the Devil -	113	vidence -	165
" XV. The Blind leading		The Jewish Race -	313
the Blind -	129	The "Noble Earl" and the Essays	
" XVI. Sam Stokes, the Shoe-		and Reviews -	301
maker -	145	The Roman Church -	221
" XVII. George Barrington -	161	The Topic of the Week -	365
" XVIII. The Early Mutter-		The Transfiguration of Christna -	183
ings of the Storm -	177	The Two Thieves and the Cruci-	
" XIX. The Infidel Meeting	193	fixion -	276
" XX. An Evening at the		Zoroaster, Life and Teaching of:—	
Rectory -	209	§ 1. Ancient and Modern No-	
" XXI. The Great Unpaid		tices -	24
and Poaching 237, 253		§ 2. The Zend Language and	
" XXII. A Conference in the		Zoroastrian Myths -	39
Rectory -	269, 285	§ 3. Initiation into Life -	56
" XXIII. The Letter and its		§ 4. Zoroaster searching for	
Fruits -	333	Knowledge -	71
" XXIV. The Rector attending		§ 5. The Reception of Hea-	
many Services -	349	venly Wisdom -	87
" XXV. London Interiors:—		§ 6. Zoroaster and the Sacred	
The Tap of the		Books -	103
"Three Jolly But-		§ 7. The Persian "Fall of	
chers" -	373	Man" -	153
" XXVI. The Worldly Society	381	§ 8. Zoroaster and the Trinity	168
Physic and Physicians in China -	311		
Providence and the Brighton Acci-			
dent -	165		

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER VII.

AFTER DINNER CHAT ABOUT THE CLERGY.

"WELL, George, so for some time at least, this is to be our last evening together."

"Yes, Doctor, it must be our night of adieus, and the worst part of it is my being compelled to go away without the hope of returning, except upon a flying visit."

"May joy be with you, for—(and you will forgive me for not giving you the original; my Italian has grown somewhat rusty)—as poor Francesca says, 'If the King of the Universe were our friend we should pray to him for thy peace.' But going away furnishes no reason for looking so thoroughly woe-begone and gloomy. Sooner or later, as the old saw has it, the best of friends must part. Cheer up, man, and let us make the best of it."

This conversation was carried on in the snug dining-room wherein Doctor Moule received, and without formality, spent the evening with his favourites. It was commonly called the Bachelor's Hall, and for the excellent reason that, excepting the female domestics, none of the fair sex were permitted to enter it. Lester had on this day dined with the Doctor, but the meal was a very heavy affair, for it had been eaten in silence; both seemed to feel oppressed by the thought of parting. Neither was this so strange as it would at first appear. Generally, men form friendships with those of their own age, here there was a great disparity of years; but the truth is, that Doctor Moule saw in Lester, the friend of his youth, the Colonel, revived again, and Lester looked upon the Doctor as a second father. Thus their attachment depended upon other than the ordinary sources, and it was more like that of the father and son than it was like ordinary friendship. But as Doctor Moule had remarked, Lester looked woe-begone, and hitherto all his attempts at throwing off the load from his spirits had been baffled.

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES, VOL. II.

B

"I wish I could be cheerful," said he, "for although at length it seems that I am about to become of some use in the world, which should make one glad, still it is not pleasant to leave the old place, the old haunts, the old friends; and, to be plain with you, Doctor, the fact of having to leave you behind saddens me."³

"Oh, yes, a neat little dish of flattery for the old man, served up in the Colonel's best style; it is delicate, but a little too highly seasoned. But in a little time you will be getting a Deanery; or, who knows? perhaps a Bishoprick, and the old place will be forgotten."

"I hope not; and as to Deanery or Bishoprick, I would not accept either, I have no ambition in that direction. But there is no danger of their being offered; I feel, indeed, that the current will not run in that direction, and as to happiness, why probably the future will not yield me half as much as I have already enjoyed in this old parlour. Still I'll not meet trouble half way."

"No, nor bow before it when it comes. Trouble has no power wherewith to crush us unless we bend our backs to make its labour all the lighter. And why should you speak of trouble? You are strong and healthy, blessed with what I call a cast-iron constitution, and although only in your twenty-third year, you have a living worth six hundred pounds a-year, with the handsomest girl in the shire pledged to become your wife. What more do you want? Why, if at that age your humble servant had been so fortunate, I should have gone frantic with delight, instead of keeping my senses to enjoy my good luck."

"You mistake me, Doctor; instead of being discontented with fortune, it is with myself I am dissatisfied. It is that very six hundred a-year which troubles me. I cannot enter into possession of it without feeling how little will be given in return. And why receive wages without being able to perform the stipulated labour? I cannot but feel guilty of injustice in taking it. No man hires a gardener without first ascertaining the fitness of the hired man; but regarding my fitness there was practically no inquiry. The examination was a miserable delusion, and so far as my own convictions are concerned, I feel to be utterly incapable of performing the duties of my office as they should be performed. I seem to myself to have wasted many years, at least they have not been wisely employed, for although I read a great deal I positively do not know anything well. The Bodleian met all my wants, but it was only in desultory reading. I read works upon Egypt, Greece, and Rome, works upon Art in all its forms, and was Goth enough to dive into the most valuable treatises upon Modern Science, where, in fact, I seemed to be more at my ease than in any other. But although I obtained an insight into many things, I mastered none, and now it appears that I have to do it all over again."

"What you read has not been lost. Now that you are settling down into the Clerical profession your studies will be mainly theological, but all the other, desultory as it was, will prove useful at times when least expected. But you are suffering from a compound disease which my physic will not reach. The first is an attack of conscientiousness in regard to your income, as being more than you are worth. It is a very rare disease, very rare, and I know of no remedy to recommend. I should advise, however, that you make speedy application to some of the Bishops, for as no men do less for their incomes than they do, they must be acquainted with some remedy wherewith to quiet the voice of conscience. Secondly, you are suffering

under a feverish conviction of your own incompetence, that also, especially in modern times, is rare, but not so much so as the other. I was afflicted in the latter fashion when I commenced practice. Although I passed through my three examinations with tolerable credit, and had gained more prizes than was usual, I could not get rid of the idea that I was incompetent. When I obtained patients, an undefinable dread came over me lest I should treat them improperly, and shorten their days. I had one case of typhus fever that nearly killed me. The idea got into my mind that through wrong treatment my patient would slip through my fingers; in which case I should be his murderer. He recovered and so did I. When his wife thanked me for my unremitting attention, she little suspected its real cause. It was a strange notion, but it worked well, for when it vanished it left a consciousness behind of the important nature of my duties, and to that I owe all my subsequent success, for it made me deal with every case attentively and with earnestness."

"But I don't see that others in the Church feel as I do. They rejoice and make merry when fortune favours them with a living; I have had a score of congratulatory letters from men who, without wishing my fortunes to be a whit lowered, do not disguise that they envy my success. They would enter upon the performance of my duties without fearing as I fear."

"Ah, probably so, but it does not follow that they would be any better qualified for the task. I knew a man, John Sedley, a fellow-student of mine, (although, in fact, he never studied anything beyond the science of boxing, the quality of porter, and the physiology of tea-gardens, wherein he drank no tea,) he obtained a most valuable appointment in the Army Medical Department, for which he was totally unfitted; and when I asked him how he intended to manage his affairs, he said that some poor devil would be glad to do the work for a small salary, he had done enough to get the appointment, and should have enough to do to spend his income. There are plenty of place-hunters like Sedley. The great majority of young men seem to be careless about the duties of an office if they can obtain the appointment. Their theory is that if employed by private persons they must be diligent in learning and performing their business, but that when public money is involved it matters little whether they work or play. And young men enter the Church much the same as they enter the Exchequer, merely because the appointment is acceptable. If the chances happen to be in their favour they go to the Bar or enter the Army, if better openings are visible in the Church, then to the Church they go. But, George, I would not have you put yourself upon their level. They do not share your fears, simply because of not having hearts noble enough to be moved by the proud sense of duty. You seem to me to be in the right track, for to be conscious of the importance of our task, and to feel our own incompetency, are essentials to all success."

"But that consciousness affords no proof of the existence in its possessor of power to perform the duties," said George.

"No, but it shows that the man has some soul in him, which, with all due respect to the popular theory about all men having a soul, is rare in these days. Look at your statesmen, have they any sense of the awful importance of their functions? Do they care about doing the best for the country? They run a race to obtain office, and after success has crowned their efforts, their whole energy is devoted to the task of retaining power, without a thought bestowed upon the actual wants of the country. Their business is not to discover and perform the statesman-work which should be

done, but to bridge over the existing difficulties and put a smiling face upon things, so as to avoid every difficult question; and when any important matter is thrust upon them, they drug the people with moral opiates, so as to suspend the sense of pain, but do not attack its evil causes lest they should lose office. And while such examples are set in high places, there is no cause for wondering that in lower offices men imagine it is quite enough if they condescend to take the pay, without troubling themselves to perform, or even to understand, their duties. But in order to understand how far you are justified in your fears, I should like to hear something of what you intend to preach."

"Preach? Why, Doctor, what else can I preach than the Gospel?"

"Aye, 'good tidings' should be preached, but what I want to know is, whose 'Gospel' are you going to preach? According to what interpretation and system? Shall you preach it according to Augustine or Origen, to Pascal or Pusey, to Calvin or Wesley? Is it to be High Church, Low Church, Broad Church, or Free Church Gospel? Are you intending to teach the dogmatical, ecclesiastical, or muscular Gospel? At present they are all in vogue; but the great majority of the people seem to be in doubt if, between them, with all their pulling and amputating, there be any Gospel which is worth the having."

For a few minutes Lester hesitated, as though not fully comprehending the spirit in which these questions were asked, but knowing the character of Dr. Moule to be above suspicion, for candour and directness, he replied.

"You think too much of these trifling distinctions, which, when fairly considered, involve no serious differences. The fact is, that they are nothing more than varieties of the one form of faith. It would perhaps be better if such distinctions were not drawn, better if all were ranged under one banner—although that is by no means certain—still, the various names and watch-words are only nominal, and do not involve any fundamental differences."

"Perhaps not; and having just arrived from the centre of Christian learning, you ought to know better about that than I do. Still, if there be no radical differences between the various sects, it will be hard to redeem their pastors from the charge of lacking charity; for why, in that case, should they be so bitter against each other? But I confess my ignorance of the subject. Theological books are not numerous in my library. I never could understand them, and, in truth, I don't believe they were written to be understood; they are not composed in the same style or language other works are. I once tried to get through Dwight's Theology, but, although making desperate attempts, I could not advance beyond the third volume, it would have killed me outright if I had read the fourth and fifth. The writers of such books always struck me as men who, to boldness of assertion, defiance of logic, and uncandid selections of facts, added unscrupolosity of argument, coupled with the resolve to bring in a verdict against their opponents, without permitting them to give in evidence. I believed in the religion they professed, but was disgusted with their sophistry."

"You are rather harsh, Doctor, in stating a painful truth. I grant their apparent lack of candour, but must maintain their integrity. They were led by foregone conclusions to say things which can be wrested to their condemnation; but—"

"The results, however, in either case are precisely the same to those who are deceived by them. But, as I was saying, they appear to me to differ

upon many important points, quite as much so as those who have connected themselves with different medical schools. For instance we have Allopathy, Homœopathy, Hydropathy, and the new 'pathy called 'the expectant method.' One man fills his patient up to the brim with pills and draughts, another doses his victims with imaginary drugs in proportions equally imaginary; one deluges his patient with pump mixture, packs him up in wet sheets, scalds him with hot water, scrubs the skin off his body, and then plunges him into a cistern of cold water as a sort of refresher; while another uses neither drugs, imaginary drugs, nor water, but pockets his fee, and blandly leaves nature to do her curative work in the best possible style. They are all medical men, they are unanimous in describing themselves as belonging to the healing profession, but whatever unity there may be in the name, there is none in spirit. There is no more hope of their coming to an agreement, except that of plundering their patients, than there is of an acid and an alkali mingling in solution without neutralising each other. And to my mind there is the same degree of fundamental difference between the theological schools; they profess to show how spiritual diseases are to be healed, but their methods are as widely at variance as are those of Allopathy and Hydropathy."

"I think, Doctor, that there is more of ingenuity than fitness in your illustration. All the theological schools, and all the sects, are united in the name of Jesus."

"Yes, and are satisfied with being united in the name, for they care not to become one in his spirit. In our times men are more afraid of being called infidels or sceptics, than they are of performing unchristian actions. They spend so much of their time talking about their religion, that they have none left wherein to practise it."

"I am half inclined to believe, Doctor, that you are becoming sceptical of the faith."

"You must not trouble to believe anything of the kind, George," answered the Doctor rather tartly. "I confess to being the enemy of mere wordmongering and falsehood in every form, but especially do I hate lying in the name of God. I have no faith in lies, and above all else I have no confidence in those who undertake to say that no word must be spoken until they have painted and decorated what they call the truth. The poor two-legged creatures stand up in their pulpits to make professions, which, practically considered, are quite foreign to the great aim of their lives. And as far as infidelity among the working-classes is concerned, I have no doubt that the clergy are solely responsible for it. They have been unfaithful to their sermon-spoken words, and the people who judge more from the life of a man than they do from his discourses, could not be blind to the contradictions. The preachers spoke of equality and brotherhood in their discourses; but, with a few noble exceptions, did nothing to prove their belief in the doctrine they had promulgated."

Lester felt that, although it had been bitterly said, there was a painful measure of truth in Dr. Moule's words. The latter spoke very warmly, for no man hated hypocrisy more intensely, or loved honest speech more thoroughly, than he did. It was one of his common remarks, that he cared not what religion a man was of, if he would but honestly profess and carry it out. He loved many Catholics and Socinians, whom he knew to be good men, but for any man to profess piety and then to act meanly, was his abhorrence. He believed that the majority of ministers hated each other; or that if they did not go quite so far as to hate, they were at least jealous of each other's suc-

cess, although, even in relation to the successful, in public declaring their sympathy.

"The other evening," said he, "I turned into the Hall, while the 'Anti-Papal Indignation Meeting' was being held. The audience was greatly excited, for Doctor Growler was upon his legs, and as usual, like a real Scotch terrier, he was snapping and showing his teeth at the Pope, which, as a matter of course, brought down the applause of the house, much to Growler's satisfaction. When I entered he was 'demonstrating' that he was prepared to die the martyr's death in defence of Protestantism, was even prepared to go any length to aid in destroying the Papal system; but it struck me that if such were the case he ought not to stay in England but should go to Rome and nail his protests upon the door of St. Peter's. Why keep so carefully out of harm's way? Did the Apostles and early teachers do that?"

"But you would not argue that every Protestant is called upon to incur the danger of losing his life? It may be as much a duty to keep out of danger as it is to utter the truth. If we are to pray to be preserved from temptation, I see no reason why it should not be argued that we have no right to tempt others to persecute."

"I do not argue for men running into danger. It is not every man's calling to become a martyr, but every man is bound to abstain from boasting of his heroism when he has resolved to incur no risk. Growler remains in England to brave the Pope, but will not venture upon bearding him in Rome. The real heroes said less but worked more bravely. Growler has taken a leaf out of Falstaff's book, for he makes sure the enemy is powerless before drawing his sword. It is the old story of a live ass kicking a dead lion, and then braying about his glorious victory. For, after all the howling, and applauding, the poor old Pope is dead enough, although the unhappy old man won't lay down, thus he becomes a butt for the shafts of such curs as Growler. There he stood, thundering, and what he misnames 'arguing' about the Man of Sin and the Scarlet Woman; while, unanimous in their applause, the lights of all our Churches and Chapels were grouped around him like flies round a treacle pot. It reminded me of a strange scene I once witnessed in a workhouse lunatic asylum. As in a very Babel, all the idiots, with their upturned faces, were jabbering their satisfaction while a lunatic was making them a speech about the wickedness of the man who made them such thin gruel, and arrogantly assumed to be their master."

Lester enjoyed the richly humorous manner of the Doctor while delivering the latter portion of his speech; it is certain, too, that the fact of his being so severe against Growler was especially grateful to the young rector, who, under the impression that they were valuable, had recently invested somewhat largely in Growler's works, but much to his annoyance, on reading them, he made the discovery that they were not written, but built by the aid of scissors and paste, out of materials which had been ruthlessly plundered from other men's writings. Hence he was prepared not only to appreciate the severe criticism of the Doctor, but to increase it by adding remarks of his own. Still, he could not overlook the fact, that instead of proving the theory about ministers hating each other, this instance tended to establish the contrary; for were not the lights of all the Churches busy applauding Growler? But when this was pointed out, Doctor Moule had a sufficient answer.

"Oh, yes; they were applauding with their hands and feet but not with their hearts. They hated him quite as much as they hated the Pope. They were sitting in brotherly union, because an outsider was to be condemned,

yet, when that was over, they were as ready to condemn each other. I have heard them preach in their own places, and, as a rule, half their time is devoted to cutting up a neighbouring preacher, some 'dear brother in Jesus,' and his doctrines. They are united in name as gold and copper are in being money, and there is no nearer likeness, no closer affinity. But come," said he, rising, "I must visit a patient near the quay, let us walk together, and have one turn more upon the pier. A turn in the evening air will be far more profitable than sitting here pulling miserable Dutch dolls to pieces."

Lester gladly agreed, for having found himself to be as incapable of successfully opposing, as he was of agreeing with, the Doctor's arguments and illustrations, he accepted the opportunity of a ramble as furnishing an excellent means of changing the conversation. When it had ended, they two parted, each returning home busily engaged in wondering when and where they should meet again.

But Lester was considerably benefited by the turn the conversation had taken; which, if it had not been strictly logical, and admirably conceived, was at least well calculated for making him look with greater confidence upon the future. For some weeks he had been hampered by the idea of being incompetent to perform the duties of his station, and, like most young men who possess a noble modesty, coupled with real, but as yet untried, strength of character, he had mistaken his fears for positive proofs. When he had finished reading the works of Growler, his mind was strangely oppressed, for knowing them to be extensively sold, and not having learnt the fact that people buy popular religious books more for show than for use, he foolishly imagined they were as widely read. He had been disgusted by their maudlin sentimentality, their japanish show of scholarship without the substance, their straining after effect, and the pompous arrogance of their verbal humility, and had concluded that if such was the religious teaching required by the world, he was incapable of supplying it. But when Doctor Moule began his attack, although displeased by its tone, he felt greatly relieved, for there was no longer the conviction on his mind of being the only person who considered Growler to be a spiritual mountebank, who cared more for the halfpence than for the donkey he balanced upon his oratory. Thus he had gained more confidence in his own judgment, and was better prepared for facing his new position. Possibly if this conversation had taken another turn, this history would never have been written; for in his frame of mind, it needed but a feather's weight to make him abandon the living of Crosswood, at least until by serving in the capacity of a curate elsewhere he should have gained the practical knowledge he considered necessary. Doctor Moule, without knowing it, had really given him the rectory, for by compelling him to recognise the fact that all earnest men commence life with doubting their own powers, he had inspired him with courage to enter bravely upon his task.

NOTICE.

OUR readers will be glad to hear that we are now able definitely to fix a time for the opening of the new place in Newman Street. On the first Sunday in August there will be a Morning Service; and the opening will be commemorated by a Tea Party and Soirée, to be held in the last week in July, of which further particulars will be given.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXVI.

A NEW ERA.

WITH the opening of the fifteenth century, humanity awoke from the torpor of three centuries. The Reign of Spiritual Terror is now rapidly coming to an end. The Church might still, and did, burn, torture, and murder those she called Heretics; but from the ashes of those she burns, there ever arise new foes. Mankind is no longer prostrate; a great idea has taken possession of men's souls, and they are ready to fight, ready to die (if need be), for it. Even the obedient sons of the Church, in matters of doctrine, are, to a great extent, adherents of the new idea. This new idea is—that humanity was not intended to be the Slave of the Priest. The Church is no longer the irresponsible Despot that she was; men have begun to examine her commands, and to subject them to criticism. The Nations, as nations, have awakened to a sense of their independence; and patriotism is everywhere setting itself in opposition to the sacerdotal despotism which has hitherto been supreme. It is true, that there has been opposition before, but it has been on the part of heretics only, never of whole nations. The power and authority of the Church have yet remained intact; and the heresies have mainly arisen from disgust at the immorality and vice of the hierarchy, and especially of the Papal Court.

The opposition now is of a different kind. There is a latent consciousness everywhere, that the old relations between Church and State should be altered; that in secular matters, at least, the State should be supreme—a consciousness which, ere long, we shall see finding an articulate expression in various ways. Civil rulers, strengthened by the feeling existent in the national mind, will no longer quietly tolerate the interference of the Church in temporal concerns; nay, in more than one instance, when their interest points that way, materially encroach upon what have hitherto been deemed the inalienable and sacred rights of the Church. 'The life of the European nations, was no longer pervaded and impressed, as it had formerly been, by ecclesiastical influence. The development of national character, and the separate organisation of the various monarchies, were making important advances. It thus became indispensable that the relation of the ecclesiastical to the secular powers should be thoroughly remodified.* Remodified it accordingly sought to be.

It is true, that this movement is not to end in the severance of Church and State; for when the Church finds that she can no longer lord it over kings, with the same absolute sway as formerly, she will accept the new conditions on which the alliance of the kingly and priestly powers can be maintained, and will earn by her services to kings what she can no longer extort from their fears. The oppression of the people will remain the same. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, however, these new conditions have not been settled; and kings are using the changed feeling of the people for the purpose of wresting them from the Church. It is, therefore, a significant fact, that the two great Reformers of the time—Wycliffe and Huss—are supported by the ruling State-authorities in their opposition to the Papacy and the hierarchy. We have seen Wycliffe defended by the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl Marshal, and the Queen-Mother; while Huss numbered among his earlier supporters the king, and a large portion of the nobility of Bohemia, as will be shewn in reviewing his career.

It is not, of course, to be supposed that these movements on the part of

* Ranke. History of the Popes, i. 31.

the laity, and the glad reception of what the Church called heresy on the part of the English people, were unnoticed or unproductive within the Church. On the contrary, there had been growing up a new movement of reform within the Church. The first of such movements took place under Hildebrand, but that had turned out a failure, because the men who succeeded that great Pontiff were not governed by the same spirit, and because, also, the idea itself was one impossible of achievement. The present movement was not on the part of the Papacy but of the hierarchy, whose wisest members clearly saw that the clergy were losing the respect of the people, and therefore in danger of losing their power. They attributed, rightly or wrongly, the corruption and vice of the priesthood to the unlimited power of the Pope, and the interference of the Papacy in the national Church governments; they supported the Papacy as a centre of unity, but would subordinate the papal authority to the authority of the Church as represented by its Councils. Thus, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, we see the Papal autocracy attacked on various hands; a strong party of dissatisfied laity within the Church looking with suspicion both on Pope and hierarchy; a heretical party without the Church desirous to destroy it, and a party of reforming bishops desirous of renovating it. It was the signal failure which attended the efforts of this latter party which led the Church in the end to accept the alliance of the State on its own conditions. At this time, therefore, opposition was making itself apparent both within and without the Church. The former found its ultimate expression in the great Reforming Council of Constance; the latter was identified with John Huss.

In such a threatening aspect of affairs, it is hardly possible to imagine that the state of things disclosed by history, with reference to the hierarchy and Papacy, could have subsisted. It would seem, indeed, that a judicial blindness must have fallen on the priesthood. The position can only be fully appreciated by imagining a vessel in the midst of a stormy sea, the crew all below, thinking nought of the surrounding danger; some sleeping, some carousing, and others quarrelling; while above, the captain and the officers are disputing as to who shall take the helm, and guide the ship into a safe port. Meanwhile the winds whistle ever shriller and more shrill; the big storm-clouds gather round; the seas mount higher and higher, and threaten the vessel with destruction; but still the crew pay no heed, and sleep, carouse, and quarrel only the more, while the captain and officers are as far as ever from having settled their dispute. This was, in fact, the position in which the Church was at the time when Wycliffe was completing his labours, and Lollards were becoming numerous—when John Huss commenced his work, and the great Bohemian revolt against Rome was soon to arise there-out; and when the better and more wary among the priesthood were arriving at the conclusion that some reform was necessary, and must be effected.

Let us look for a moment at what was the aspect of things within the Church; and first, at the state of the morals of the clergy, and their capacity for meeting the spiritual wants of the people. John Trithemius, the Abbot of Spanheim, thus exposes the corruption of the priesthood in the fifteenth century:—"Unlettered and rude men," he says, "wholly destitute of merit, rise to the priesthood. No attention is paid to purity of life, a liberal education, or a good conscience. The bishops, occupied with temporal affairs, devolve the trouble of examining candidates upon persons of no experience. The study of Scripture and learning are totally neglected by the priests, who prefer occupying themselves with the training of dogs and

"birds. Instead of buying books, they beget children; and instead of studying, make love to their concubines. They sit with tipplers in the taverns, are addicted to gaming and debauchery, and destitute of the slightest fear of God. They can neither speak nor write Latin, and scarcely know enough of their own language to explain the Gospels. Nor is it a wonder that the inferior priests are so illiterate, and averse to the study of Scripture, considering that in this they have the prelates for a pattern, who are appointed to their offices, not for superiority in learning, but for superior skill in making money. Even they are seldom or never possessed of a Bible, and plainly show a hatred of science. They are blind leaders of the blind; and in the place of guiding the people in the paths of righteousness, rather misguide them. Hence they need not be at all surprised that the laity despise, when they themselves despise, the commandments of Christ. I very much fear, however, that something still more dreadful awaits them ere long." *

While such as we have seen was the state of the hierarchy, what is known as the great Schism of the West has deprived the Church of her Head—the fact of there being two Popes, mutually excommunicating and anathematising each other, rendering it impossible for Christendom to say who is the Pope and who is not. The existence of two rival Popes, was, in fact, tantamount to there being none. The source of this schism is found in the preponderance gained by France in the papal councils. French Cardinals, from national prejudice, and the rest under the pressure of French influence, having elected a series of French Popes, they changed the papal residence from Rome to Avignon. Rome has looked with impotent hate upon this, all kinds of influences have been brought to bear upon the Avignonese Pontiffs to induce them to return to Rome, but without effect. At last the Italians, exasperated by the failure of their efforts in this direction, elect a Pope of their own, and there is now a Pope at Avignon and one at Rome. This event took place a short time before the death of Wycliffe, who did not fail to take advantage of it to damage the papal idea in the minds of the people. Thus was the allegiance of Christendom divided; some of the nations declaring for the Italian, some for the French Pope. The two Popes lend a handle to the growing opposition by the shameful accusations which they fling at each other.

It is exactly at this moment, too, that a little book appeared, entitled "On the Corruption of the Church," written by Clemangis, a Churchman and a member of the University of Paris. The effect produced by it was wonderful, scarcely short (if we take the authority of Michelet) of that wrought by Luther's tremendous book, "The Captivity of Babylon," written more than a century afterwards. This, however, is an exaggeration, but the book opened the eyes of many, and is useful as throwing light upon the state of feeling in the Church, and as exposing the vices of the Papacy and the priesthood in general. In it, we are told how the papal brokers scoured all Christendom to ascertain what beneficed clergymen might be ill, so that the Popes might put the benefices up for sale; how both Popes, like dishonest traders, would sell the same benefice to many, and having delivered the goods, put them up again and sell them a second, a third, and even a fourth time.† The papal Courts were the places in which every vice, and almost every crime, which disgraces humanity, might be found stalking with unabashed and brazen front, and the mutual recriminations of the Popes were really not without

* Ullmann. Reformers before the Reformation, i. 182 3 Clarke's Theological Library.

† See Michelet's account. Hist. France, ii. p. 68.

foundation, In the presence of facts like these, we cannot wonder that a strong spirit of opposition without the Church, and an earnest desire for reform within it, should have grown up; and now it is that those influences, of which we have already traced the gradual growth, will be found bearing their fruits, aided in this by the blindness and folly of the dominant party within the Church itself. To shew what these fruits were will be our business in succeeding papers.

JAS. L. GOODING.

THE NATURE OF A MIRACLE.

NOTWITHSTANDING that, both abstractedly and historically considered, so much has been written by eminent men within the Christian Church against the ordinary theory of miracles, there seems to be a settled resolve, which is daily growing stronger, not to argue the matter as one which is open to doubt or criticism; but to rest content with declaring that, within a strictly-defined limit of time and space—from Noah to St. Paul, and within the borders of Egypt and Palestine—actual miracles were wrought, the history of which has been preserved. Men are not wanting who, as a whole, hold fast by the Church theory, and yet deny the portion of it which relates to miracles; they are, however, so few in number that, to the old-fashioned reasoners, their protest seems rather to strengthen than to weaken the popular belief. Moreover, the majority deny to the repudiating few the right of calling themselves Christians; for, agreeing with a great modern writer, they say of miracles, that, “by common consent of friends and foes, “their authority has been considered identical with the safety of Christianity “itself.”* Their argument is, that the Christian religion rests upon a supernatural foundation, and that, unless it were thus authenticated, it would be utterly unworthy of credence. They are not persuaded of the intrinsic worth of any statement being equally the same, whether authenticated or not; and yet no truth can be more clear. Good food is not made bad by men not believing in its goodness; and if a maxim in morals be propounded, it is as difficult to perceive how testimony can demonstrate its truth, as it is to comprehend how the absence thereof would render it utterly worthless. And that which is true of morals is equally so of religion, for the truth of its propositions cannot be determined by the aid of ordinary evidence, and assuredly cannot be rendered clear by the aid of miracles.

But although Christian believers, when dealing with miracles in a verbal and superficial manner, are almost unanimous, and loudly boast of their perfect agreement as furnishing a clear element for the Christian evidences, they are at variance with each other upon the fundamental points; they agree, that all men are bound to believe in miracles, but differ about the nature of that in which their perfect confidence is to be placed. When a Christian writer furnishes an inquirer with the definition of a miracle, he is set upon by his brethren in the faith, who repudiate his explanation, and deny his orthodoxy. They consent to believe in miracles, but only while their nature is left undefined—not when that nature is laid bare. And if it be said that their quarrel with any particular author rests, not upon their desire to prevent the nature of miracles from being explored and explained, but upon the fact of his having erred in his explanation, then it is competent to the inquirer to demand that some generally-received explanation shall be furnished. This has never been supplied, and simply because the authorities in the various

* Journal of Sacred Literature, p. 26. April, 1854.

Churches cannot agree upon any satisfactory explanation. Immediately they begin to define a variety of insuperable objections come into the field of intellectual vision; and, taking alarm at their appearance, the old position is fallen back upon, that it is better to accept in faith what we do not understand, than to lose our power of believing through labouring to understand.

In the absence of any universally-approved definition, we are compelled to fall back upon the works of eminent divines, who have endeavoured to explain the matter; and it is curious to notice the various shifts to which they have been put, in order to escape the definition furnished by Hume, who says, "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature;"* and, in his note, adds, that "a miracle may be accurately defined as a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent."† It is not surprising that this author fell into the error of confounding the two parts of this interesting question, for he was by no means so careful in conducting his reasoning processes as many suppose. He tripped, and has been cleverly caught; yet, unhappily, they who detected his error have been far more careful to reply to his sophism than to answer the objections which obviously were present to his mind. And, although all the modern authorities have endeavoured to avoid saying that "a miracle is a violation of a law of nature," they have endeavoured to use the idea in that sense. They would have all the advantages which result from such a belief, without stating the belief itself; but, if one side of the definition suit their purposes, there can be no fair argument against accepting the other.

Dr. Cumming says: "A miracle is not, as some have attempted to show, contrary to nature. Never accept this definition of it, because, as I shall show you in subsequent lectures, Strauss, one of the most subtle and most able infidels of modern times, has laid hold of this, and tried to do great mischief by it."‡ So that the definition is to be rejected "because Strauss laid hold of it;" but, surely, men are not to test the value of definitions by the theological opinions of those who furnish them. They might as well reject Mathematics, because the Pagan Euclid was their author; or declare that the theory of gravitation cannot be true, because Diderot used it, in order to aid him in his attempt to disprove the existence of God. If the definition be sound, what can it matter who used it? And if the contrary be true, then, for that reason alone, should it be repudiated. This author goes on to say: "A miracle is not a thing against nature, but is a thing above and beyond what we call nature. For instance, when we read of our Lord's healing the sick, and in other instances raising the dead, we hear it said, this is contrary to nature. It is no such thing. We call it contrary to nature, because we say that sickness is natural. Sickness is not natural; it is an unnatural thing; it is a discord in the glorious harmony; it is a blot upon the fair creation; it is most unnatural, and was never meant originally to be."§ The absurdly contradictory nature of this passage is too palpable to need exposure; nor can it be necessary to point out, that no sane man ever supposed "miracles of healing" were "against nature," because of believing that "sickness is natural." Their idea was clearly this, that a sudden cure, effected without recourse to the use of ordinary means, was to be viewed as "unnatural," or, in other words, "at variance with the ordinary course of nature." Neither do men believe that sickness is natural, in the sense of being "an established condition of life," as this

* *Essays and Treatises*, vol. ii. p. 122. Edit. 1784.

† *Foreshadows*, p. 8.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 480, Note K.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9.

writer so wildly assumes; on the contrary, sickness is invariably treated as a departure from the normal and general condition, which needs systematic treatment for its cure.

Of course it is readily conceded, that upon such, and similar subjects, Dr. Cumming is not either among the learned, or recognised as an authority in the Churches. It was not to serve such a purpose that his remarks have been introduced, but merely to show what straws are flowing upon the stream, and which way they float. He is merely the second-hand repeater of other men's thoughts; and whatever is found in his works is well known to have been borrowed from others who think with greater accuracy, and speak less pompously, than he does. The definition he furnishes must have been given by many others, or he would not have ventured upon its utterance; and thus he stands forth to represent a class of Christian men, who say of miracles that "they are not things against, but above, and beyond nature." Dean French says: "The true miracle is a higher and purer *nature* (so far from being "against nature), coming down, out of the world of untroubled harmonies, "into this world of ours, which so many discords of ours have jarred and "disturbed, and bringing this back again, though it be but for one prophetic "moment, into harmony with that higher. . . The sickness which was "healed was against the true nature of man . . . the healing is the "restoration of the primitive order. We should term the miracle, not the "infraction of a law, but behold in it the lower law neutralised, and, for the "time, put out of working by a higher." *

Olshausen takes up the same position, and argues it as evident that "we cannot adopt that idea of a miracle by which it is regarded as a suspension "of the laws of nature. . . Phenomena which are not explicable, from the "known or unknown laws of the development of earthly life, ought not, for "that reason, to be looked upon as violations of law, and suspensions of "the laws of nature; rather they are, themselves, comprehended under a "higher general law, for what is Divine is truly according to law." † The latter sentence contains a complete begging of the whole question; this, however, must now be passed over, it being our aim at present merely to discover in what way miracles are defined, according to the popular theories of our Churches.

Dr. Wardlaw, a man highly esteemed by the Presbyterian Church, represents them as sufficiently defined, when, in the language of Nicodemus, they are said to be "works which no man can do, except God be with him;" to which he adds, that there are "works involving a temporary suspension of the "known laws of nature, or a deviation from the established constitution and "fixed order of the universe; or, perhaps more correctly, of that department of the universe which constitutes our own system . . . works, therefore, which can be effected by no power short of that which gave the "universe its being, and its constitution and its laws." ‡ This is clever as evasion, but valueless as a definition; it assumes all that should be proved, and proves only that the author had never grappled in earnest thought with the difficulties which surround the question. Did Dr. Wardlaw know the limits of human power so completely as to be justified in saying exactly what man can and cannot do? And what did he mean by "a suspension of the known "laws of nature"? Does it make any difference in the nature of the circumstance, whether the laws of nature be known or not? One man knows ten laws of nature, another knows but of two, and, because of his ignorance, the

* French. Notes on Miracles. † Bible. Comm., Matt. viii. 1-4. ‡ On Miracles, p. 24.

latter will consider many occurrences to be miraculous, which the former can explain as being nothing above ordinary phenomena; yet who would argue that the nature of events depends upon our wisdom or ignorance when conceiving them? If Dr. Wardlaw meant to say the same as Dean French, that miracles are events which accord only with higher laws than any of those which pertain to our sphere, then we can acknowledge the distinction, although repudiating the soundness of his definition. As it stands, he evidently desires to get rid of the idea, that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, but still to take credit for it as a supernatural event; he desires to evade Hume, but still to use his general argument, whereas, if he desired to retain the theory of the miraculous, he should have shown that such events do happen and are not subversive of the course of nature. P. W. P.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, P. H. D.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

If the glory of Israel were greater than that of other nations, the latter may console themselves with the reflection that the splendour and power of the former were but of brief duration. The unity of the tribes only lasted through two reigns, scarcely even so long; for, strictly speaking, it was not completed until after the death of Saul, and it was broken up before the death of Solomon. The surrounding tribes, which had been subdued by David, were not long in discovering that his son Solomon possessed none of the valour needed for retaining the ascendancy. And although in modern times men are dazzled by the meretricious splendour of Solomon, we may rest assured that the defeated tribes were not thus influenced. They revolted, and evidently with some considerable measure of success; but, unfortunately, the narratives of those events are in a hopeless state of confusion. The first is given in the following passage:—"And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was of the king's seed (the royal race) in Edom."* The writer then proceeds to give the history of this Hadad—what caused him, when a boy, to escape from Edom, and what his course of life had been: "For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom; (for six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:) that Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad being yet a little child. And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land. And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh. And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in anywise."† It is probable that, according to his request, he was permitted to return, but the writer does not state in what form he opposed Solomon. It is hardly to be believed that he took any active measures against him in the early part of his reign; because evidently Solomon was at peace with Egypt, having married a princess out of that country. But as years went by, the chances are that he raised a revolt among his people. This

* 1 Kings xi. 14.

† Ibid. xi. 15-22.

is what Josephus asserts;* though it is doubtful if he had any distinct historical narratives to guide him in the composition of this part of his history.

According to the Book of Kings, "God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah: And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus. And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria."† It is impossible to gather anything from this fragment, beyond the intimation that Solomon had an active enemy in Damascus, and when the later history is considered, it will appear probable that even the "conquest" made by David had been nothing more than a victory over a people who, beaten to-day, were equally ready to fight again on the morrow. We are too apt, in considering these ancient narratives, to put in modern ideas, and to conceive of these wars and battles as similar to our own. There is no affinity between them. They were border feuds, and, for the most part, nothing more than battles between roving tribes, in which the victor, as far as blows were concerned, came off in much the same condition as the vanquished—the chief result was in the number of cattle captured, whose loss for a time weakened the losing tribe. While David lived, there is no reason for doubting that the profit was made by his people, who, led by the valiant ones, were pretty certain to enrich themselves at the expense of their neighbours; but when Solomon ascended the throne, that business ceased, the tribes were left in peace, and soon recovered themselves sufficiently for carrying on the feud by reversing the order of proceeding. They attacked the Hebrews, and made spoil of their flocks and herds, and it is in that sense we are to understand the words, "the mischief that Hadad did."

But is it not curious that in each case it is "The Lord" who stirs up these men against Israel? The writer evidently looked upon every act, every change, every feud, as determined by Jehovah. When David went forth to fight against the Syrians or the Philistines, or any other tribes, it was "The Lord" that stirred him to action, and then when any of these rose against Solomon, it was Jehovah who set them on. The people of God were everything while the heathen were nothing. The latter were viewed in no higher light than as chaff to fly before the pursuing Israelites, or as gnats to sting them as occasion required. They were not looked upon as equally God's children with the sons of Abraham, and even to our own times men read the narratives in the same spirit as that in which they were written. They speak of the Syrians as vile wretches who deserved no better fate; and yet when it is borne in mind that "they had no guidance from Jehovah," while the Hebrews were blessed with such light, the wonder is not that the latter are denounced for their obstinacy, but that the former are not pitied for their misfortunes.

The next account of those who rebelled against Solomon is that of Jeroboam. It is such a curious narrative that I cannot forbear reading it: "And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king. And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph."‡ Or, in other words, 'because Jeroboam had exhibited great skill in the building of Millo and the walls of Jerusalem, Solomon gave him authority as an overseer.' He was empowered to collect the taxes, but it is evident that the people cared not to pay them, but were rather disposed to revolt against the king. Jeroboam sided with the oppressed, but probably only after he had been exhorted to do so by one of the prophets, of which the following curious account has been preserved: "And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had

* Antiq. B. viii., c. 7, § 6.

† 1 Kings xi, 23-25.

‡ Ibid., xi, 26, 28.

"clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: and Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (but he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel.)" * In modern days this would be treated as instigating a rebellion; and without regard to the man being a "prophet," he would be condemned as a traitor. Probably, too, the statement of a man tearing up a new garment into twelve pieces, when he only wished to say that the twelve tribes of Israel were thus to be divided, would hardly find acceptance as a possible occurrence. As poetry, a man could conceive it, but the symbolism is very heavy. Two men in a field together do not need such round-about methods to arrive at such small results. They were as much men as we are, they understood the plain meaning of words as easily, and it is quite certain that they were even more careful of their garments. Of course, if we allow ourselves to be led into the world of imagination, it will become easy to fancy the scene; but keeping to the world of men and facts, there is no reason for accepting the statement as anything beyond the pictorial method of telling a story.

Of course, in connection with promises to Jeroboam, causes for the disruption were assigned. The writer says: "Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: but I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee." †

They who "love to dwell upon the wonderful fulfilment of prophecy," are partial to this passage, as indicating clearly the foreknowledge of God, to which, however, there are two objections. In the first place, the assumed "prophecy" was not fulfilled; for unless the later history of Judah be false, David had no representative upon the throne. Even before the captivity, the sceptre passed from the hands of David's descendants. Aliens sat upon the throne of Judah, and when the hour came for submission to foreign masters, even the throne itself was destroyed. These words were not fulfilled: "And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there." ‡ Thus even if men will insist upon giving them a spiritual meaning, in connection with the ages after the life of Christ, no such explanation can fill the void which preceded his birth.

(To be continued.)

* 1 Kings, x. 29-32.

† Ibid. xi. 33-38.

‡ Ibid. xi. 36.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD TOWN OF CROSSWOOD.

THE town of Crosswood, situated in the county of Swinborne, is one of those scarcely-known petty boroughs which, despite the Reform Bill, still continue in existence as anomalies in our political system. Its name is seldom heard except at election times, when suddenly it blossoms into importance, and is frequently named in the daily papers as the source from whence two members flow into Parliament. But when the general election has ended, its name ceases to be repeated, and its locality is no better known to the majority of Englishmen than is that of Peekillung, in the heart of Africa, or the town of Squirt, in the State of Arkansas. The common argument in favour of maintaining such petty boroughs is that they furnish to modest, yet patriotic and intellectually competent men, the opportunity of being elected, which, through their timidity preventing them from addressing large popular assemblies, would be utterly denied them if all boroughs were as populous as those of Finsbury, Birmingham, or the Tower Hamlets. There is a small measure of truth in this assertion, but unfortunately Crosswood has not furnished the illustrious example. Through four hundred years of our history, it has not once failed in sending up its two members to every Parliament; yet in no single instance has it succeeded in electing men who either commanded the attention of the House, or whose general knowledge proved serviceable to the country at large. It may have been that the people did their best by selecting the fittest men the district furnished, but if so, then the specimens were not calculated to win for the borough the admiration of the world.

Our readers will eventually discover themselves to be interested in knowing the sitting members. They were The Right Honourable Trounson Osbald Owlet, and Sir George Losel, both being well-known gentlemen of the

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES, VOL. II.

C

shire. The former was not distinguished for excellence in any special form, except that of being able to consume devilled kidneys to any conceivable extent; for which gastronomic feat he had an extraordinary passion. In his younger days he fought two duels, stripped a street of its bell-pulls and door-knockers, walked a match for £1000 a-side against a sporting gentleman of the shire, rode a race-horse nearly as well as a common jockey, and ostentatiously boasted of being able to carry more port beneath his belt, without stumbling, than any other man in England. This latter, like all similar honours, was not allowed to be worn unchallenged; on several occasions he was challenged by old toppers to drink a match, but having invariably succeeded, according to the slang of toping, in "drinking them blind," he continued to be the master-drinker. Finally, and by way of crowning all his victories, probably as a testimony of his country's gratitude, he was elected as a Member for Crosswood, and thus became one of our national legislators. There were men who had the audacity to question his fitness for Parliament, but, as his friends triumphantly argued, until it can be shown that they who sit have, as a rule, superior claims, it is unfair to object to Owlet retaining his seat.

Sir George Losel could not boast of possessing so many advantages. He could boast that one of his ancestors went crusading in the days of the Lion Heart, and for himself, that he was a good dancer. The latter qualification could not be questioned, for it had been so decided by the ladies at all the county balls. Nature had evidently intended him for a dancing-master, and nothing more. When he walked the streets his thin figure was like that of a doll set upon wires, and his every movement was as a votary of fantastic motion; none who saw him upon the public streets would have suspected him of being an M.P.; but fate had crowned him, and great was the loss sustained by those who might have been improved by his lessons in dancing.

Still, it must be confessed, that taken upon the whole, the sitting members were two good-natured, easy, and affable country gentlemen. They were largely tolerant of all opinions which opposed their own, unless, indeed, they were liberal opinions. If they tended to extend education, to weaken the Church, to reduce the national expenditure, to extend the principles of free trade, to increase the number of voters and enlarge the constituencies, or to endanger game-preserving, then the two members were sure to oppose them; but otherwise they were liberal, and always ready to subscribe to hospital and agricultural funds. The people of Crosswood were said, in the Weekly Ploughman, to be very proud of their members; and as they were never known to make speeches, they furnished no opening for the Editor of the County Tomahawk to cavil with what they had said. No men, ancient or modern, had profited more largely than they had done by observing a decorous silence.

An exception should, perhaps, be made in favour of Sir George, who certainly possessed one speech, which served him on several important occasions; originally it had been composed for use at the opening of his political career, when, in a contested election, he was placed at the head of the poll. In this speech—prepared by a clever London agent—there was a great deal about "the glorious victory which had been obtained over unprincipled liberal opponents," as also about "the gallant stand made by the electors in defence of our glorious Constitution"—passages which took amazingly with the people of Crosswood, who applauded them to the seventh heaven; and, in

after years, when an election occurred, Sir George invariably repeated the favourite speech as a sort of thanksgiving oration. The people expected it, as constituting an essential part of the play, and would not be defrauded of their time-honoured rights. At the last general election there was no opposition, and in delivering the speech, with a tact hardly to have been expected from him, Sir George was omitting "the glorious victory" passage; but the crowd would not tolerate it. They roared and shouted for "the whole speech, victory part and all;" and it was only when he most condescendingly and amiably bowed to their decision that they permitted him to resume, beginning, of course, with the strong passage about "the glorious victory," and so going on to the end.

It was hard to say why this was demanded, for, with all the Conservatism, there was a deal of Liberalism amongst them. There had not been a substantial election for many years past. Had all the electors voted as they wished, the Liberals would have been returned. Of promisers and well-wishers they always had the majority, but these never held on to the end of the poll. Lord Bampton, the owner of three-fifths of Crosswood, managed his business so admirably that his nominees were always returned, without ever raising the difficulty of a Parliamentary Inquiry. When the fatal election morning arrived, a surprising number of the liberals were out of the way; they "had business which called them suddenly into the country;" and no one could say that they had been bribed, for they had not. The truth seemed to be, as the old clerk said to Lester, "The fact is, Sir, they can't be bought to vote for the man they don't like; and being afraid that the candidate they do like won't get in, they say it's useless to lose their man and their holdings both together; so they just goes away into the country, and comes back when it's all over, to find themselves safe in the houses in which they were born; out of which, if their man had got in, they must certainly have gone."

On the morning after his arrival at the rectory, Lester was visited by Stevens, the parish clerk and sexton, a man who made it his boast, that he had enjoyed the privilege of attending the christenings of two generations, and of burying two others. He might, without outstepping the truth, have said more; for he had filled his double office through about three-and-thirty years; and, judging from his appearance, he had been clothed in the same garments during the whole of that period, for his suit of black was worn white and threadbare. He was tall and bony, thin and hungry-looking; his neck was particularly long, so much so, that surgeons had suggested the probability of his having an extra cervical vertebra; his face was bronzed, and somewhat harsh in its expression, which seemed, however, to be more the result of stern life-troubles than of any harshness in his natural disposition. His voice was, to strange ears, remarkably unpleasant; but, as it had been satirically set forth by the old rector, what it lacked in sweetness was compensated for in strength and power.

Stevens knew the private history of nearly all the inhabitants of Crosswood; no breath of scandal ever rose upon the air without reaching his ears, and none could escape being inscribed upon the tablets of his memory. It could hardly be said that he sought after such narratives; still, he invariably heard and treasured them up, and in an innocent garrulous way repeated what he had heard. A stranger listening, for the first time, to his stories would have concluded that he was a studied mischief-maker, but it was not so; for, although he proved to be the cause of more bitterness than any other man in Crosswood, he neither loved nor desired it, but was frequently

annoyed at the consequences which flowed from his habit of spreading the idle stories of the hour. Strictly speaking he had no mischief in his nature, but he could not hold his peace. What pleased him best was to gather the young ones, like a little flock, into the churchyard, where he sat for hours together, telling them stories of his distant boyhood; stories of the battles in which he had been engaged, or repeating passages of "poetry," composed by himself, upon the events of his chequered life, or those of the inhabitants of Crosswood. Sometimes rising up into a more than usually energetic mood, the old clerk would mark out with his spade some outline of a battle-field, then, as he recounted its deeds of heroism, he went through the scenes in action, and with an effect upon the minds of his youthful auditors which even a Kemble would have been proud to produce. Poor old man, he was in his second childhood, which was hearty and healthy, full of cheerfulness and love, not unspiced with humour.

Stevens had visited the "new rector," not only through the prompting of his curiosity to discover what sort of man was to be his future master, but through hoping to win his confidence by conveying information about the general character and conduct of the parishioners. The late rector had always readily received the bundle of news brought by the clerk, and seemed to have a morbid liking for scandal; but this was not one of Lester's weaknesses. If it can be said that he hated anyone it was the tale-bearer, for he would not permit even a servant to breathe tales, in his hearing, which were calculated to injure the reputation of others, unless the speakers were prepared to do so in presence of the accused parties. Hence it was that directly Stevens began to tell of how there was "great doubt if Howson, the pork-butcher and pig-jobber, had not been paying improper attentions to Mrs. Thurtles, the grocer's wife," he cut him short by observing that, until he had seen and spoken to his parishioners he would rather not hear anything to their disadvantage.

Beaten from his proposed course, the clerk humbly suggested that probably Mr. Lester would like to see the town, and "knowing it so well, with all its ins and outs, I should be glad to act as your guide. There is much about it," said he, "which no stranger, left to himself, could find out, and many of the courts cannot be gone through without assistance."

Lester was rather amused at the idea of there being any difficulty in the way of exploring Crosswood, because, as he had been informed, from the top of the Church tower every inch of it, every lane and court, could be distinctly seen. Before reaching the rectory he had partly resolved to ascend and survey the whole before endeavouring to examine it in detail; but when Stevens put in a few remarks about "old buildings and their curious history," with which he professed to be acquainted, the new rector resolved upon accepting the proffered guidance. He was, however, doomed to disappointment, for all "the curious history" with which the clerk was acquainted, turned out to be something about suicides and divorces, ghosts and witches, with other idle stories, all of which, much to Stevens' disgust, were pooh-poohed by the rector.

At the corner of Blair court, the clerk pointed out "the residence of Mother Charlton, the old witch, who did so much hurt to honest people, until the Devil, her father, took her."

"But Stevens," said Lester, "surely you do not believe in witches?"

"Of course I do. I must believe in them as well as in angels, for they are spoken of in the Bible."

The slightest and most casual survey of Crosswood is sufficient to satisfy the traveller that originally it had been nothing more than an oblong square. There were four roads, all of which terminated at the cross in the centre of the market-place. The old stone-cross had long since disappeared; doubtless the tradition which said that it had been destroyed in the days when "Popish idols" were so sturdily blotted out, was perfectly correct. In the centre of the market-square stood the town-hall and cage. It was a strange, rambling, old building, which had grown with the ages; some parts being timber and plaster, others of brick, but the whole resting upon fine old Norman pillars, among which, under the hall, the corn and butter-market was held. Other commodities were sold from temporary stalls, erected round the hall on market days. On the four sides of the market-square the principal shops were ranged, and it was curious to observe the strange medley of styles in the buildings. Every man seemed to have taken offence at the form of his neighbour's house, for he built his own as much unlike the others as possible. Lester had been informed that there was little or no unity of feeling among his parishioners, except in their hatred of the tax-collector, and their love of good-feeding, and as he glanced upon the odd buildings round the now deserted market-square, he felt that, so far as it could do so, the outward evidence confirmed what he had heard.

They who hate regular lines in building, cannot do better than make up their minds to reside at Crosswood, for in the whole place, except in a few modern cottage-streets, hardly two houses alike can be found standing together. Many residences, even in the square, are only of one, some of two, and only a few of three storeys; a few are Norman, some Elizabethan, and others are of no style or order yet set forth in architectural treatises. There were red-bricked, white-washed, black, and a few painted fronts, and many preserved the ancient sign-boards. Thus lovers of old cities could not pass, especially along the west side of the square, without pausing to look at the elaborately constructed timber houses, with their antique gables and overhanging storeys, once the boast and pride of our ancestors. The sharply-pointed roofs and the red Dutch tiles carried the mind back to a date when England had not learned to walk alone, when native industry was so unconscious of its own power that it purchased even its tiles from the Dutch trader, and dreamt not of the value of those resources which lay hidden beneath the soil.

There was one house, now used as a grocer's shop, which had stood through four hundred years without its noble beams trembling or giving the least signs of decay. Time was when the brave Squire Townley had gathered his followers within its walls to maintain the cause of English liberty against King Charles and his Cavaliers; tradition said that Oliver Cromwell passed a night there; they show the room in which he is supposed to have slept; and old Stevens had a long story to tell of its being haunted by some determined Puritan spirit, rendered uneasy by what it had done while in the flesh, and in that house, against the Royal party—some shot fired during the attack upon the house, the said shot having struck down the lordly leader of the assailants; a result not likely to have troubled any of the men who were engaged in that terrible conflict. Many of the panels in the upper rooms still held the bullets shot into them during the struggle, which Stevens said "were worth seeing, but, unfortunately, no Churchman could now go in to look at them, for the present owner is a rank Methodee, and given up to their ways."

The clerk had arrived at the conclusion that dissent is a sort of contagious disease, which presents itself in various forms, none of which, according to his theory, are worse than that of Methodism. Just by the western corner, he pointed out an old, red-brick, two-storey shambling sort of house as that of a Quaker, in which William Penn had often slept. He evidently thought Quakerism was not so bad a form of the dissenting disease as real downright Methodism. Passing along George Street, one of the best in the town, he pointed out "the Independent Chapel, as being quite as ugly as the lives of the people who attends it."

Lester inquired why he spoke so bitterly of them.

"Because," said Stevens, "their parson gets up in his pulpit to make a prayer of his own; he doesn't even know when he begins neither what he is going to say, or where he is going to leave off."

It struck Lester as a curious, and altogether unsatisfactory, reason for concluding that the people who attended were unworthy of respect; but before he could make any comment upon it, or ask the question rising to his lips, Stevens, pointing to a low-built house, with a fine carved front, now used as a barber's shop, broke in with the information that "Nicholas Waters, who lived there, was one of the wickedest men in Crosswood," and gave as his evidence that, "although an old man, he never goes to a place of worship, but travels out into the fields, hunting after birds, and butterflies, and lizards, which the dirty fellow preserves. His house is full of all sorts of dead things, stuffed birds, dogs, and a tiger, and at any time he will give all the money he has in the world merely to get hold of some new specimen, as he calls it; and when I speaks to him about Church, he laughs, and says that he worships God in loving the things which He has made."

On the eastern side of the Market Square stood the George Inn, formerly called the Royal. It was the pride of Crosswood, and certainly it was a noble specimen of the Halls of olden times. Two hundred years ago it was the country seat of the Bamptons, to which family it belonged for at least four hundred years; but as the town increased, land became valuable, and the heir found it to be more profitable to sell the park lands for building purposes, and to erect a new hall upon another estate. The George retained its primitive appearance, and in the day of its glory it had been pointed out as the great building of three storeys. Its front was of wooden beams and red brick, which, however, was completely covered by ivy and roses that clomb up to the six attics, each with its quaintly pointed roof; the whole looking more like the six roofs of as many houses than the single covering of one. In front of the George stood the usual racks and watering troughs, at the end of which, from massive beams, there swung a portrait which was popularly supposed to be that of "Good old King George," but unless the stranger were expressly told what to look for, he would never have suspected its being the likeness of any object, animal or human. Within the house there was abundant evidence of its former dignity. The kitchen was large enough for a party of one hundred, and if all at once they had engaged to swing from the massive beams which stretched across the ceiling, the timbers were strong enough to have held them. The recesses on each side of the fire-place were deep enough to admit of seven sitting on either hand, so that while the storm rustled without, a goodly party could sit in that old chimney corner, free from care and protected from danger. The noble old room, with its oak panels, in which "his worship sat in state" to administer the law, was now the "Commercial room," and many were they who had an extra stoup of

liquor in order the more freely to sit and admire the fine old well coloured carving. That, too, was the great room at election times, where the *Elite* of Crosswood prepared for answering the Royal Writ; for mine host was a stout Tory. And on market days when the hearty farmers gathered in to take dinner and discuss the prospects of the country, corn, and what was doing in Parliament, they were won by the aspect of the walls to drink one glass more in memory of the good old times.

The host of the George, Mr. Bampton Samuel Juniper, or "Old Juniper" as he was generally called, was quite as well worth seeing as the house itself. He was one of the heartiest old landlords tired traveller ever met; a sort of farmer-squire, who still kept the George, not in consequence of any passion he had for being a landlord, but because in that house he was born, and it had been the scene of all his troubles and joys. When told that water-drinking was becoming popular, he declared it to be his opinion that it would be better for England, and that he cared not if he never sold another drop of liquor. It was a sight worth seeing when Old Juniper, in spotless top-boots and red coat, rode out of his yard to follow the hounds, and few were the runs in which he was not in at the death. His favourite horse was both stout and strong, but of the two Juniper was stouter and stronger. His face was round, full, merry, and red; his nose, buried so deeply between his swelling cheeks, was so small as scarcely to be worth calling a nose; his twinkling eyes sparkled like two glow-worms set in a round of beef, and his laugh, rolling in his stomach before it was thrown out, so much pleased Abernethy who once heard it, that he declared the best thing a dyspeptic patient could do would be to sit two hours every day to hear Old Juniper laugh.

As a rule the people of Crosswood were as much behind the age in general intelligence as they were in business habits. The only sign of progress in the town was seen in the New London Spirit Vaults, which had been fitted up in the West End style. A Mechanics' Institute had been started, but it closed in the second year, through the Dissenting Ministers being upon the book committee. Each wished to get the books of his own sect purchased, and those of the others excluded. They were unanimous in prohibiting light literature, and voted for the admission of such scientific treatises only as none of the members could understand. The speedy result was complete failure, and a speedy sale. There was a silk-factory at one end of the town, a paper-mill at the other, and at these many of the young of both sexes were employed, but the inhabitants generally looked with dislike upon those who were known as "Mill hands," and treated them rather as criminals, or at least as very suspicious characters, than as honest citizens. There was no railway communication, for unanimously the inhabitants had petitioned against a proposed line, their argument being that, as their ancestors had done without it, there could be no need for any such change. Taking the town and people as a whole, they were rather of the past than the present, and although, as it will be hereafter seen, moved by the same passions as other men, they clung to the past as tenaciously as the limpet clings to its rock. And if Lester was somewhat interested by what he had seen of the old town, and rendered more desirous of learning more of its people, they were not a whit less curious about the character and views of their new rector.

LIFE AND TEACHING OF ZOROASTER.

§ 1.—ANCIENT AND MODERN NOTICES.

As a general principle, it is assumed, when speaking of the Past, that each nation had a mission, a work to do in the world, which, well done, secured them an immortality; but we should find it difficult were we called upon to declare distinctly, and in each case, what that mission was. For many nations have neglected their duty, and in pride or ignorance have turned from their proper work, with the sad national result of decay, wars, and death. What was the mission of the Persians? Who can tell the work that nation was intended to perform? We read with wonder of Cyrus, Darius, and the other Conquerors; in the pages of Herodotus we are initiated into the workings of their national life, but it seems to have had no aim beyond that of dominion, splendour, and revolution. The red men of America occupied the soil for ages, but did nothing more than moisten it with each other's blood. Doubtless a fine story could be told of the wars of the Delawares and the conquests of the Sioux, but without any noble result, in the shape of example or teaching for mankind at large. The Persians seem, upon the whole, to have been some civilised red men, for they fought and conquered, but gave no enduring results to the world.

If any exception can be made in their favour, it is in the life, work, and teaching of Zoroaster, who shines out in their hemisphere as a bright particular star, both as a man and as a moral teacher, and it is to what is known of him that we propose inviting the attention of our readers.

Preliminary to our narrative biography, it will be prudent to learn what history relates of this celebrated Persian. And first regarding the time or age wherein he flourished. This, however, is rather difficult to determine, although, according even to the best authorities, there is sufficient latitude to satisfy even the most exacting. The range of choice extends over about 6000 years. Pliny gives the authority of Eudoxus for fixing the death of Zoroaster that number of years before the birth of Plato, which, according to the accredited Biblical Chronology, would be over 8000 years ago. That date is not generally accepted, still the writers of Antiquity are unanimous in naming a time much further back than is tolerated by modern chronologists. Plutarch, in his marvellous book upon religion, "Isis and Osiris," fixes the Zoroastrian era at 5000 years before the Trojan war. Diogenes Laertius, who calls him "Zoroaster the Persian," says that, "from the magi, of whom the chief was Zoroastres, to the taking and destruction of Troy, were 5000 years." Thus the classic writers, who have dealt with this subject, assign him a great antiquity; but Justin, who epitomised the history of Trojus Pompeius, places him only 850 years before the Trojan war. This seems to have been a favourite era, but it is unsatisfactory, for the modern reader inquires when it occurred. That question cannot be readily answered, for several learned gentlemen have united in declaring there never was any such war, and consequently that Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Priam, Hector, Paris, and Helen, are all figments of the imagination. They inform us that Troy had no existence, that the Greeks never assembled as Homer asserts, and, consequently, that the whole story is no more than a myth embodied in the noblest poetry. Without endorsing their statement, it has still to be confessed that we are wholly unable to fix the date. Grote, Thirlwall, and Niebuhr are equally uncertain about it. They can only conclude, that the story has an element of truth in it which cannot now be separated from the

incorporated fiction with any degree of certainty. Thus, according to the classic writers, Zoroaster flourished 5000 years before the Trojan war; but when that war began or ended, or whether it was ever carried on, we cannot say. Thus great is the light derivable from the said Classics on this important point. Modern criticism and research, however, is kinder, for by means of its results we are enabled to state, that the Zoroaster of our religious conceptions lived somewhere about 600 B.C.; and that the men alluded to by Pliny, Justin, Plutarch, and other Greek and Roman writers, though in some way connected with the religion of Persia, Media, and Bactria, were of a different stamp, and altogether much inferior in wisdom and power to that one who lived in the age we have just named—600 B.C.

But we must not pass thus rudely from the Classic to modern authors; between the two there lies much which it is important to know, of which, if left unnoticed, these articles would furnish only an unfair exposition. The question has been vigorously discussed as to who Zoroaster was. For instance, it has been seriously asked, When we say Zoroaster, do we not mean Moses? It has been contended by Huet, that Moses and Zoroaster are the same persons, and, in order to establish this, he cites many passages from their writings, all of which he believes to prove that they are the same in thought and forms of expression. He entertained the notion that the Persians were enriched by the Jews, who gave them their Pentateuch, when the poverty-stricken Persians immediately set forth to the world, that the man who had thus taught was a Persian, and named Zoroaster. This belongs to what may be called liberal criticism, because it arrives at large conclusions without requiring the aid of a single foundation fact, and, "consequently, should be "widely accepted." Unfortunately, however, the name Zor-Aster means "star worshipped," and thus could not have been given to Moses. The absurdity of this Mosaic explanation was too palpable for general use; and hence, without ever troubling themselves about the facts, without ever reading the Zendavesta, other gentlemen have put forth the equally false though less astounding opinions, that he was Abraham, though called by another name by the Magi, in order to hide the theft. But looking at what is reported of the two lives, we do not find a single mark of connection. The events wholly differ, and hence that idea must equally be scouted. Others inform us that "he was a clever man, who, hired as the servant of Elisha, "discovered his master's wisdom, and, 'like all the Pagans,' was base "enough to declare to the Persians that it was his own." A pretty theory, but, as in all the other cases, lacking everything in the shape of fact, which alone would justify us in accepting it. And when the critics declare he must have mingled with the Jews, else he would never have known what he knew, they evidently beg the whole question at issue; for may it not have been far more likely that the Hebrews borrowed from the Persians, than that the Persians followed fondly the tales of their Hebrew slaves. Indeed, we undertake to demonstrate, when the proper time arrives, that it was from the Persians the Jews obtained their ideas of early history, with their later conceptions of God,—that from the Persians they obtained the majority of their Rabbinical Fables, and that many of the ideas now forming the main staple of modern theology have no other origin or authority than that they derive from the ancient Persian teachers.

Possibly, however, this strange way of jumping over, instead of fairly meeting, and conquering, the difficulty, was suggested by the fact that the old historians speak of so many persons as Zoroaster, or of so many Zoroasters. Sir

Walter Raleigh, a man of considerable research, and unquestioned liberality, says, in his history of the world: "Of Zoroaster, there is much dispute; and "no less jangling about the word and art of magic. Arnubius remembereth "four to whom the name of Zoroaster or Zoroastres was given; which by "Hermoduras and Dinun seemeth but a cognomen, or name of art, and was "as much as to say, *Astronomus cultor*. The first, Arnubius, calleth the Bactrian, which may be the same that Ninus overthrew; the second, a Chaldean, "and the astronomer of Ninus; the third was Zoroaster Pamphylus, who "lived in the time of Cyrus and his familiar; the fourth, Zoroaster Armenius, "the nephew of Hostianes, which followed Xerxes into Greece. Suidas "remembereth of a fifth, called Persomedus Sapiens, and Plato speaks of "Zoroaster the son of Oromasdes." Thus a brave, inquisitive Raleigh, writing his history of the world while lying in prison, pondering on the mysteries of the past while actually under sentence of death, knows not what to make of all these Zoroasters, and though never doubting the fact of such a man having lived, he evidently hesitated about naming his age and country. So also Stanley, in his ponderous volumes on "The History of Philosophy," published in 1662, some forty years after the death of Raleigh. That writer enters fully into the matter, and fishes up, out of the ancient books, all that has been said and thought of this Persian teacher, so that for the luxurious student in search of a mud-bath, nothing can be finer than Stanley's "Zoroaster and the Chaldaic Philosophy." True, indeed, that he furnishes all the Arnubian, and other suppositions, and stories and etymologies of the name, but unhappy must be the man who reads his book with the vain hope of discovering either who Zoroaster was, or what were his teachings. Bryant, too, in his "Analysis of Ancient Mythology," treats us to similar collections, which force the reader to inquire if the pea and the thimble have not been introduced into literature, with the wager that you shall not discover the man you seek. But the richest of all, either culled from the past, or conceived by any of the moderns, is the idea of the learned Dean of Norwich, Dr. Prideaux, who had the modesty to suggest that Zoroaster had been employed as a servant by Ezekiel, and hence his knowledge. It would be about as wise and as probable to suppose that Shakspeare had been employed as the servant of the immortal Nahum Tate!

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXVII.

JOHN HUSS.

At the time of Wycliffe's death, John Huss was about fifteen years old, having been born in the year 1369. The place of his birth was Hussinecz in Bohemia. The son of poor parents, he was early inured to labour. Nature, however, had fitted him for higher things. Early in his youth he started from his village home, to study at the University of Prague, with the view of becoming a priest. In 1396 he obtained his degree of Master of Arts, and two years after we find him lecturing to the students on theological subjects. It was probably the popularity he soon gained, and the capacity he showed in this, that led to the offer, made to him in the year 1401, to become the preacher in a chapel called Bethlehem, which had been erected by some of the wealthy citizens of Prague, with a view to supply what in the ordinary services of the Church was not frequently found, viz., practical advice and instruction in the shape of sermons in the Bohemian tongue. Here Huss,

gifted with more than ordinary eloquence, and sincerely desirous of reforming the vice and immorality of his time, soon gathered round him a little community of warm and devoted friends, who, like himself, were earnest Reformers. His sermons made a powerful impression upon all who went to hear him, as the sermons of all who, as he did, preach, not doctrinal theology, but practical Christianity, ever have done. He denounced, in terms of unmeasured severity, the vices of the people—did not, however, content himself with that, but also showed them, as far as he himself saw it, the true path of morality and happiness.

The distinguishing characteristic of Huss, as a Reformer, was the thoroughly practical bent of his teachings; he attacked vice only that he might paint virtue in her true colours; he troubled himself very little about doctrine; and became a Heresiarch, not so much because he disputed the teachings of the Church, as because he hated and exposed the vice and immorality fostered by it. In him, in fact, we see another Peter Waldus; the Church repudiated him, rather than he the Church; his great sin, in her eyes, really being that, by his life and by his words, he condemned the manners of the hierarchy, and the evils which were sown and cultivated by their teaching and example amongst the laity. His popularity as preacher at Bethlehem Chapel soon attracted hundreds to hear him, and ultimately led to his being appointed Confessor to the Queen of Bohemia. Indeed, so great was his influence, that while he restricted his eloquent denunciations to the laity, the clergy themselves looked with favour upon him, and Monks, Priests, and Friars were frequently among his hearers; but when, ere long, he commenced the same course with the clergy, and denounced the abuses within the Church, these became his bitterest enemies.

In the year 1408 Sbinko was appointed Archbishop of Prague. He was one of those men (to whom in our paper of last week we alluded) who saw danger in allowing the corruptions in the priesthood to continue unreformed. He therefore looked upon the work which Huss was doing with favour, and gave him his countenance and support, in spite of the animosity of the monks and friars, and many of the clergy. As one who dared thus openly to attack the hierarchy, Huss found a friend, too, in the King of Bohemia, who bore an ancient grudge against the Church, for the part it had taken in preventing his election as Emperor. Thus countenanced by the authorities both of the Church and of the State in Bohemia, Huss continued to attack, with unsparing zeal, the corruptions of his time, as exemplified in the lives of the priests and of the people. His attacks on the hierarchy rendered his teaching acceptable to large numbers, who had become indoctrinated with the views of Wycliffe, whose writings had been introduced into Bohemia many years before, as also to those who may be looked upon as secret followers of Peter Waldus, of whom there were many in this country.

Bohemia was, of old, a land of heresy. We saw in a former article how Peter Waldus found his last refuge there, and all the efforts of the Church had been insufficient to root out the effects of his teaching. There had always been Waldenses in the land where lay the bones of Waldus. The fact of Richard II. of England having married a Bohemian Princess had drawn the two countries into intimate relations at the time when Wycliffe's popularity was at its height, and while yet he was patronised by the Court. Many of the Bohemian nobility visited England, and became acquainted with the writings and teachings of Wycliffe, and some studied at Oxford under him. This led to a close connection between the Universities of Oxford and

Prague, and there is but little doubt that Wycliffe's writings became well known in the latter University while yet John Huss was a student there. There is no doubt that many of the students at Prague were the children of those who professed in secret the faith of Peter Waldus, and who would therefore be, by early teaching and association, prepared to gladly receive the doctrines of Wycliffe. That these, too, should rapidly spread among the Bohemian people, is a thing not wonderful, considering the wide-spread influence which the teachings and memory of Waldus had continued to exert amongst them. They were, therefore, the breath which fanned into quicker life a spark already existent there.

In loyalty to truth, and in justice to Huss—in order also that we may comprehend what distinguished his Reform from that of Wycliffe—it is necessary to mention, that the writings of the great Englishman do not appear to have been the cause of the course taken by Huss at Bethlehem Chapel, inasmuch as he had been repelled from any careful study of them by the brand of heresy which had been affixed to them; and it remained for him, in his riper years, to feel the full force of Wycliffe's teaching. At the same time it is very probable that, though the course he took was determined by the natural bent of his own mind, the influence of Wycliffe was not lost upon him, even in this earlier time. To the careful study of Wycliffe's works he was at last led by his friend, Jerome of Prague. "Jerome," says Neander, "was one of the few knights in Bohemia distinguished by their zeal for science and literary culture." And with a more vigorous hand than usual the Church historian thus draws the portraits of these two men, friends in life, co-workers in the same great cause, and fellow-sufferers for it: "Huss, a man of more calmness and discretion, of a character at once firm and gentle, more inclined to moderation, possessed of less numerous and diversified gifts, of a less excitable spirit, fonder of retirement within himself and of silent self-seclusion than of mingling in the busy turmoils of life—Jerome, full of life and ardour, of an enterprising spirit, not disposed to remain still and quiet a long time in one place, whom we find now at Oxford, next in Paris, then at Jerusalem, in Hungary, at Vienna, and in Russia, everywhere attracting observation, and everywhere provoking opposition, a man possessed of a gift of discourse that bore everything before it, but who, in the excitement of the moment, was easily led to pass beyond proper bounds, one who needed the cool considerations of a Huss to act as a check upon his activity."*

Between Huss and Jerome, men as opposed in temperament as Luther and Melancthon, a similar friendship arose, and through life they worked together. Jerome had been a scholar of Huss' at Prague, and afterwards visited Oxford, returning in the year 1398 to Prague, bringing with him many of Wycliffe's writings; Huss, with the natural authority of the teacher, had declined to accept Jerome's estimate of their value then. Five years after, the heads of the University of Prague undertook to examine the works of Wycliffe, which had, by Jerome's means, been extensively circulated among the students. Now it was that Huss seems to have made a study of them, and although never accepting some of the doctrinal views of Wycliffe, had his mind powerfully impressed by his anti-sacerdotal teachings. Jerome now shook hands with his master and friend, and Huss acknowledged that he was right when he said: "Until now we have had nothing but the shell of science; Wycliffe first laid open the kernel." This marks a new era in the life of

* Neander. Church Hist. ix. 354-5. Bohn's Edit.

Huss, who henceforward wavers not in the course he has already begun, his own views having been deepened and considerably widened by the influence of Wycliffe's works.

All honour to Huss for what he did ! for that he dared to preach truth, justice, and goodness, to an impure and unjust generation ; but let us not laud him for things he did not, or attribute to him wider or wiser views than those he held. He never became so thorough a Reformer as Wycliffe, although the debt of the Reformation to him was perhaps even greater, for that he sealed his testimony with his blood. John Huss, in his greatest advance, retained much of the priest, and never rose to the grand conception that every man is his own best priest. Priestcraft would never have been supported, but it would never have been destroyed by Huss. Let us not blame him, however, for that, when a greater than he failed in destroying it. Luther himself, after all the mighty work he did, still left Priestcraft amongst us. The Reform of to-day must be to destroy it.

When will the time come for men to recognise the character of the true Priesthood, which knows nought of *priestcraft* ? For there is a true Priesthood ; and the idea which it would embody is one upon which Priestcraft has traded. Even as Priests have abused the sacred name of Religion—have turned aside the religious soul of man from the good and true—so have they abused and traded on the necessity which mankind feels for human guidance and sympathy. The heart of man yearns for communion with his brother man ; the ignorant and the weak have a natural desire—and a right too—to ask guidance and instruction from their wiser and stronger fellows, the sad and sorrowing have need of the consoling voice of sympathy and love, aye, and the sinful and the fallen may be raised again by the outstretched hand of that charity which covereth a multitude of sins. This, then, is the mark and behest of the true Priesthood—that guidance and sympathy which man, stronger, and wiser, better instructed, more largely gifted, may give to man, weaker or more unfortunate. In this sense all the best amongst us may become priests ; the capacity confers the right. Man speaking to man, aiding and assisting man, in whatever way, whether by word or action, is the true Priest. Such a man is God's consecrated servant doing His will ; he needs no sanction of Churches, no imposition of bishop's hands, no ordination of man, his sanction is from heaven, his ordination from on high. Such must be the Priests of the creedless Church of the Future ; and to the goodly company, the best and bravest, the wisest and the greatest, will of right belong. With the exception, perhaps, of Wycliffe, the Reformers of the past—Huss no more than the rest—never reached to the height of this conception, and so *Priestcraft* is with us still. Let us not blame them for this ; men do not jump to the possession of all truth at once.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Sbinko finds that Huss is travelling beyond him, and teaches not only the necessity of reforming, but in case reform is found impossible or useless, of destroying the existing hierarchy, and of establishing a priesthood in their place, who shall not foster superstition and set an example of vice and immorality. Huss had, in fact, travelled beyond the Archbishop by reason of his partial adoption of the views of Wycliffe. It was not long before an occasion arose for a rupture between them ; when, by an attempt made by Sbinko to purge Hungary of the Wycliffite "heresy," he called forth the energies of Huss in defence of what he held to be the truth. To this, and the results arising thereout, we turn next week.

JAS. L. GOODING.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

(Continued from p. 16.)

THE writer of the Book of Kings proceeds to relate that Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, but does not say that the latter had committed any overt act of rebellion. He merely relates the Ahijah story of the rent garment, and leaves us to imagine how this private scene influenced Solomon. But Jeroboam fled into Egypt, there to abide until after the death of Solomon. When that event occurred, the "representatives" of the ten tribes assembled at Shechem, probably intending to revolt. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, went thither under the impression that he could win them over to his throne, but they were absolute. The people spake unto Rehoboam, and said: "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." * They had suffered, and knew what heavy taxation meant; but the young king desired time to consider the matter. Our modern theologians have arrived at the conclusion that "in making such a proposal, the people were guilty of a great sin, because God had made Israel one, and was Himself their ruler." The theory seems to be that Israel was a theocracy, and that whatever the people suffered, it was not for them to change the form of government; they were to suffer and wait, to be obedient and submissive, until the Lord, in His own good time, would give them liberty. Thus Rehoboam was perfectly justified in his course. The historian relates what he said unto the people, and what afterwards occurred: "And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." † Were they bound to submit unto the flogging he promised them? Is there to be no limitation to the endurance of a nation? There are men, theory-ridden men, who seem to labour under the conviction that the toiling millions are "born so drudge and suffer, born to labour and to pray," and are not justified in taking up arms against those who decree injustice. Fortunately, others exist to teach a nobler doctrine, and under their leadership, there is some hope of the future becoming brighter than the past has been, while the submission doctrines governed the conduct of men.

But the curious fact connected with this story is, that although the ten tribes are condemned for revolting, it is asserted they were guided by God. The historian says: "Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause

* 1 Kings xii. 4.

† Ibid. 5-14.

"was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat." * So that they were only executing the will of Jehovah, and yet it is asserted that they were guilty of sin. But if it be true that God had resolved upon dividing the kingdom, is it not probable that He would direct those who brought that end about? If the ten tribes exhibited selfishness in the matter, may it not be that such was the intended means? It is for the theologian to answer such questions in accordance with common sense, others may object altogether to the theory that God had anything to do with the transaction. I find, on reading the narrative, that the whole occurred according to known courses of human conduct, and believe that the preceding narrative about Ahijah is merely a priestly supposition afterwards thrown in by some man who imagined himself to see the hand of Jehovah in all events.

The tribes sent to Egypt for the exiled Jeroboam: "And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only."† The son of Solomon prepared to punish the revolt, by raising a great army, which, however, he was prevented from using, because "the word of the Lord came unto Shemaiah" to forbid the war. Still, however, it is rendered doubtful if peace were preserved, for in another passage we are told: "And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days."‡ But evidently the former was too much crippled by Shishak, the king of Egypt, to do much against the other. It is reported that it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made."§ Thus the glorious temple was stripped almost before the workmanship had time to show itself; the spoiler was there as soon as the builders had left it, and such being the case, it is natural to believe it never had been so beautiful and richly wrought as later writers imagined. The question is open for discussion whether the temple of Solomon was not the fiction of later ages. Solomon may have built a temple, but it was the authors of the captivity who found, in their own imagination, all the gold and silver wherewith to adorn it.

Jeroboam became king of the revolted tribes, and he was a far-seeing man. Here is an illustration: "If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi."|| This was a stroke of royal policy perfectly natural to a king, because, as a rule, such beings do not seek either for the noblest or wisest, but only for that which appears the best fitted to promote their own happiness. Jeroboam calculated that his own safety rendered it necessary his people should not go up to Jerusalem; but the prophets did not approve of this setting up the calves. It is related that a man of God came out of Judah and raised his voice against the altar the king had set up. Jeroboam ordered his seizure, but having put forth his hand against him, that member was "dried up," and the altar was rent: "And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before."¶ The grateful monarch invited the prophet home to take some refreshment, but the invitation was declined upon the following grounds:

* 1 Kings xii. 15.

+ Ibid. 20.

‡ Ibid. xiv. 30.

§ Ibid. 25-26.

|| Ibid. xii. 27-31.

¶ Ibid. xiii. 6.

"For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest."* He went his way, but was entrapped into coming back by a deceitful old prophet. The story is a curious one: "Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back: And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told in the city where the old prophet dwelt. And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him. And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass. And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones: For the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass."†

(To be continued.)

* 1 Kings, xiii. 9.

† Ibid. 11-32.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER IX.

THE POINDERS AT HOME.

SCARCELY a week had passed after the arrival of Lester at Crosswood, before he was engaged to dine at Rose Hall, where he was to meet Captain Oscott, Squire Bezley, and a select circle of friends. When the day arrived, although not anticipating much pleasure from the visit, Lester walked away in that direction. From the Rectory the distance was considerably over a mile, but a pleasanter country walk could not be found in England. The Hall stood far away from the high road, out of which, through a lodge gate, the visitor passed beneath a noble avenue of beeches to reach an open space, from whence, upon a rising ground, at the distance of about three furlongs, the home of the Poinders was to be seen. It stood in a small park-like enclosure, which was, however, but a trifling portion of the noble domain that originally belonged to the family, from whose last descendants the present owner had purchased it. The old family was supposed to have gone to ruin through neglecting wisely to use their landed property; but the present owner was not likely to fail in a similar manner. In the olden times, so the aged said, there was no paradise which could have surpassed the grounds around Rose Hall; not that they were finely laid out, but Nature had grouped her trees and formed her terraces in a picturesque style, which greatly surpassed the finest laying out of the artistic gardener. They who originally owned the estate had been wise enough to allow of that wild luxuriance and tangled growth which adds a charm to the most beautiful scenes; but the present proprietor, hating every form of free growth, would not tolerate trees unless they grew in regular plantation lines, and even their branches were freely lopped off when they ventured upon throwing themselves out in an independent style. The gravel walks were all straight, and, in truth, hedges, plants, terraces, and trees bore testimony to the fact that their owner possessed far

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES, VOL. II.

D

more money than taste. Every inch of ground was under rigorous supervision; and although it was not, and could not be made, obedient to the will of its master, he was equally resolute in refusing to allow it liberty to produce after its own fashion. Like many modern gentlemen of the shires, he treated his land as the wandering Italian boy does his organ—as the source of profit. It was perfectly useless to speak to him about the beauty of the country, for he saw it not, and had no eye wherewith to see. It was said of Peter Bell that—

“A primrose by a river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.”

It was nothing more to Poinder, unless, indeed, as a machine out of which he could grind so much profit. A country won his admiration exactly in proportion to the market-value of its produce. And as to the song-birds, he tolerated them because of having been convinced they were of use to the farmer. For a long time he was debating in his mind whether it would be better for England if there were no birds. They plundered the fruit trees, and ate a deal of corn; it was suggested that they sang to man, in return for what they had eaten, but he coolly asked if by their singing they could fill the listeners' cupboards. So far as his power was concerned, their fate was sealed, until an old farmer convinced him that they are excellent agricultural assistants. This caused a change of purpose, but of course without leading him any nearer to the appreciation of their exquisite melodies. He remained still a Peter Bell in regard to Nature. When travelling in the Highlands, he savagely told his wife, who had been extolling the scenery, that there was nothing but ugly mountains, dirty villages, and bad roads; once, when he was in the lake district, he declared there was nothing worth seeing, for it was all “brown mountains, hard water, and sky not so blue as at the theatre.” Not only was he devoid of poetical feeling, but also of all perceptions of beauty; and this was made manifest by the ruthless style in which, at his first coming, he attacked Rose Hall. It was a noble old Manor House, but he converted it into a square building. There were several deep bay windows, which he cut away in order to make the walls “square and orderly.” All the ancient furniture had been swept away, and sold by auction, because he could not tolerate it in the house. But when the carved oak had vanished, he was not sparing of the means to furnish with rosewood and mahogany. The Hall was fitted up without regard to cost, and yet there was not a room in it where real comfort was to be had. Every chair stood, sentry-like, in its place, as if afraid to move. That elegant disorder which marks the home of the man of taste, was unknown at Rose Hall, and in its stead there was starched formality, and cold precision.

The personal appearance of “Ralph Poinder, Esq.,” was anything but elegant or prepossessing. Being short as a Laplander, fat as a Turk, and bandy-legged as a Fakcer; having a florid complexion, a large mouth, big red ears, and restless gray eyes, he looked more like a retired coachman than a rich country-gentleman. Had he generally appeared in ragged garments no doubt the police would have kept a sharp look out upon his proceedings. It was not difficult to perceive that he was not a gentleman either in manners or mind; for although exceedingly anxious to be considered a member of the *beau monde*, it was perfectly certain he had no conception of what constitutes the true gentlemanly character. There was in his style and manner of speaking to dependants and servants, a sort of bullying tone, much like that

which characterises the speech of small jobbing contract masters, who are resolved upon getting as much as possible out of their workmen, but who are not so careful on behalf of their own employers. It was one of his favourite theories that the labouring classes must be kept down, and that, unless they were treated with severity, gentlemen would scarcely be permitted to walk the streets, in addition to being compelled to clean their own boots. When addressing tradesmen, a never-failing and most annoying pomposity marked his tone and manner, which was as ludicrous to the well-informed as it was irritating to the ignorant. The latter were vexed at being thus treated, because the style so painfully reminded them of Plethor the beadle, clothed in his new-laced coat, issuing his order of march to the charity children; but the better-informed took his orders with the due measure of servility, and then, when his back was turned, compensated for their degradation by caricaturing his pompous style, and ridiculing the man.

It was when Ralph Poinder was at table dining with the squires, or sitting upon the bench as a magistrate, or figuring at an evening party, that it was amusing to see him. He tried to be at home in every conversation, and literally failed in all. If a scientific subject were introduced, he could not bring himself to confess his ignorance, but persisted in nodding and ejaculating, "Indeed," "Ah, yes!" as if he were greatly interested in the subject, when the fact was that he neither understood the technical terms made use of, nor cared the value of a straw for the science. At times his remarks were particularly *mal à propos*, but generally he remained unconscious of the fact. Many were the sly strokes of satire aimed at his impudence and ignorance by those of the *ton* who scorned the upstart but were delighted with his dinners. He returned the compliment by scorning them; mutually they hated each other, yet dared not openly confess the fact. He aimed at being a man of consequence in society, and thus stood in need of their countenance; while they, aiming at securing the largest possible measure of good-feeding, stood greatly in love of his dinners. So that to obtain their ends each consented to play the hypocrite to the other. They were all "honourable" and straightforward self-seekers; and as each was careful to assist the other, they managed to convert life into that horrible kind of farce which terminates in the tragedy of self-destruction.

In modern days the question has been raised—though not elegantly proposed,—“Have the lower animals got souls?” To which, as was to be expected, most opposite answers have been given, accompanied with the usual measure of bitterness. Men are generally the most positive upon those points about which they know nothing. Some have declared that “the animals are also immortal,” and consequently the poor untutored Indian, who, according to Pope, expects in the other world to recover both his dog and gun, has all at once turned out to be a great intuitive philosopher. But before deciding the question, either for or against the pigs and ducks, it will not be amiss if the learned will first determine whether all men have souls—whether they who live the life of ease, neither achieving, nor even having, any purpose beyond those of feeding, dressing, killing time, and sleeping, have souls?—or, if, at starting, they be supplied in that particular with the same bounty as others, their souls do not become so lean and dwarfed as hardly to deserve the name? They who propose to “save souls” are generally labouring among the lower classes; not that they believe all the sin to be with them, for it is confessed that with the upper ten thousand there is more than the average share. And may it not be that as they never propose a West End or

a Belgrave and Eaton Square Mission, it is their conviction that the souls of those who reside in those districts have become so dwarfed and stunted in a spiritual sense as to render their souls unworthy of being saved?

But, with all his faults and weaknesses, Poinder was proud of his children, of whom he had seven, three being daughters, who were all at home. The sons were either at college or travelling, and of that fact their father was especially proud. In his general conversation, he frequently observed that it was very doubtful if colleges were as useful as men imagined; if they were not best off who had the good fortune to escape them; but this was when the remembrance crossed his mind that he had not matriculated; for although frequently sneering at a university career, he was none the less proud in his heart that his four sons were, or had been, Oxford men.

The Miss Poinders were natural curiosities, and yet not worth much study; in fact, there was nothing in them which it was difficult to learn, for their characters lay upon the surface. Jane Victoria, the eldest, took after her father in height and form of face. She was short, robust, and remarkable for the abundance of her bright red hair. Passionately fond of gay colours, she managed to mingle all those of the rainbow in her dress, but being utterly devoid of taste, she arranged them as rudely as the red Indian squaw arranges blue and other beads upon scarlet cloth. Had she been born of poor parents, there is every reason to believe her position in life would have been that of a cook, and a good cook too. It was her delight to be among the pies and made dishes, both in the making and consuming, for her appetite was as good as her desire for cooking was intense. It was a pity Soyer never had the good fortune of being introduced to her; for, had he been, there is reason to believe his eloquence would have prevailed to make her descend from the proud level of her fortunes to pursue cooking as a glorious branch of art, in which case she would probably have given a new Poinder dish to the world, and all future feeding ages would have called her blessed.

Margery, the second daughter, took more after her mother. She was pale-faced, tall, thin, narrow-chested, and round-shouldered; but there was an activity, and even a degree of gracefulness, in her movements, that tended to destroy much of the unfavourable impression produced by her first appearance. There was, too, an almost Quaker-like quietness in her style of dressing, which interested the observer even when it failed to please. She moved about the house almost as silently as if it were the family vault, and for some time past she had not been known to laugh. Just at this period she had become very religious, according to the mechanical methods of Pusey. She ate no meat on Fridays; she visited the ruins of an old abbey twice a-week for devotional purposes; she tried a few doses of the hybrid Confessional; she surrendered a goodly portion of her time to the poor, distributing tracts about the consequences of not attending church, or the duty of obeying their pastors and masters, and spent her evenings either in reading the Lives of the Saints, or in obtaining a knowledge of Puginesque architecture. It had entered her head that Providence sent her into the world to be the bride of a clergyman; and, with perfect honesty, according to her restricted light, she was doing the best towards fitting herself for the supposed duties of that position.

Lucy, the youngest child, now in her nineteenth year, was well-formed, of good stature, and clear-complexioned. She was not beautiful, but pleasing; and it was impossible to look upon her sparkling eyes, or her happy face, without satisfaction. Unfortunately, her voice was rough and man-like; it

was dictatorial and thoroughly unpleasant; so much so, that until a considerable time had passed, so that habit had somewhat blunted the sense of its discordant tones, it was utterly impossible to pass an hour in her company without sore annoyance. To make matters worse, she was "passionately fond of Tennyson," whose poetry she knew by heart, but without comprehending any of his subtle meanings; and frequently she recited passages which had been highly praised in the quarterlies, or in some of the magazines; and when this occurred, it was a perfect torture for those who knew his poetry to sit and listen while its meaning was being obscured and its music destroyed. Upon one occasion she assisted in an amateur entertainment—got up for the benefit of "the Crosswood Gridiron and Coal Scuttle Society,"—by "reading the May Queen," when the effect produced upon young Brier, the poet and reporter, was so fearful that he suffered under a fit of nervousness through at least six months, and never wholly recovered. This, however, he dared not notice in the "Tomahawk," because Ralph Poinder was the most liberal supporter of that wonderful journal. In the report, the reading was pronounced to have been of first-rate excellence, bringing out all the exquisite points in the poem, and displaying a thorough mastery of the poet's thoughts. Lucy read the notice as gospel truth, and was so far hurried away upon the stream of fancy as to deplore that her position in life deprived her of the opportunity of outshining Helen Faucit or Miss Glyn as an actress and reader of Shakspeare. All day long she was engaged mutilating passages from the dramatists and poets, or counting the hours which must elapse before another party or entertainment would give her the opportunity of once more displaying her talent to the benighted sons of Adam.

After dinner, when the ladies had retired, Lester was half-annoyed, half-amused, with the conversation. Captain Oscott had recently heard of a "society for improving the cottages of agricultural labourers," and vented his indignation upon the "meddling fellows who will not be content to let well alone, but must always be interfering with the landed gentlemen of England, as if they did not know what is best for their own labourers."

"No good can come of it," said Poinder; "no good. They will go on making labouring men discontented with their masters and their work, until, by-and-bye, men of property will be compelled to emigrate to some country where they can do as they please with their own, and then it is most likely the labourers will be in a fearful plight, for they will have no cottages to live in."

"Right; that's exactly my opinion," put in Squire Bezley; "and the fact is, that Parliament should interfere, to render all such societies illegal. They are a wretched set who get them up. Cottages, indeed! Why, it's not many years ago since the working men had nothing but mud-huts, and were contented with whatever they could get. Now the labourer is told that he is an injured man, and that he ought to have higher wages and less work. I'll be shot if some of my labourers don't believe themselves to have quite as good a right to the land as I have. And this all comes of schools. Education is ruining the working classes of England; and it will never be well with us until the schools are shut up, and the stocks brought back again."

"The stocks. Ah! yes," said the blundering Poinder, "there is nothing like the stocks for a man with a cool head and a calculating mind. I have cleared my twenty thousand in a day. I had a friend who used to let me know the contents of the despatches—"

Here, suddenly, he checked himself, for, unconsciously, through mistaking the meaning of the Squire in naming the stocks, his mind reverted to its

former occupations, and he gave vent to secrets which, in cooler moments would not have been permitted to escape his lips. The wine, of which he drank freely, had probably something to do with it; but he was sober enough partially to redeem his error, by adding, that of course he "never went on 'Change after reading them until they had been published."

Lester brought the conversation back by observing, that the cottages of the poor were in a most deplorable condition, that the stables of every gentleman surpassed them in comfort, and that, unless some improvements were made, the social morality of the people would be utterly destroyed.

"I have joined the new society; and, gentlemen," he added, "it was my intention to solicit you for your assistance."

All the guests were surprised at this announcement, but the rector argued the matter so clearly, that it was impossible for them to do more than rest their objections upon the well-known evil characters of the men who founded and conducted it.

"I declare," said the host, "they are all rude, unprincipled vagabonds, whose only object is to get up some kind of agitation, so that they may live without work upon the subscriptions; and it is impossible to co-operate with such fellows."

Squire Bezley said that, instead of working with them, it was the duty of every English gentleman to labour his best, in order to put them down. "It was," said he, "but the other day that a deputation waited upon me, to request that I would act as an arbitrator between some workmen and their masters. What could I do more than state that, in my opinion, it rests with the master to say what he will pay, and how he will deal with his men? The deputation wished to discuss what they called the rights of man, but I put them down, by saying, that no one man has any right to dictate to another how he shall spend his time or money, and, consequently, that masters must make their own arrangements. And, beside that, the fellows who came to me were, as Poinder forcibly says, selfish vagabonds who desire to make a living by it."

"If that were granted," rejoined the rector, "then the fault lies with those who have permitted the evil to grow to such an enormous height, and who even now are not doing anything to check it. The people follow such men, not because of loving them, but simply in consequence of the fact, that no one else stands out to champion their cause. If good men will promise to do the work, the bad men would speedily be left without followers. But if the honourable will not undertake the task, how can we wonder at the others being applauded when they engage to plead the cause? A drowning man will accept help from any who are willing to render it, no matter what their motives; even a murderer's hand would be gladly seized at such a moment, although, under other circumstances, the saved man would shrink in horror from such contact. Let us do our duty by the working classes, and I cannot help believing they will be willing to act in other things upon our advice."

The gentlemen were rendered uneasy by this plain statement of facts; and Poinder, feeling himself incapable of showing cause against it, while yet resolved upon having nothing to do with such improvements, suggested that, as it was time to rejoin the ladies, they had better defer the discussion to some future day.

LIFE AND TEACHING OF ZOROASTER.

§ 2.—THE ZEND LANGUAGE AND ZOROASTRIAN MYTHS.

WHEN evidence is furnished which justifies the complete rejection of the former theories relating to the great sage of Persia, the question naturally occurs if we are in any better position to speak positively regarding his history. Do we know anything of the man, or of the books he is supposed to have written? The answer to this must be in the affirmative, for as with the languages of Egypt and Assyria, so also with that of Persia, considerable discoveries have been made within the last century. In this work of progress France has borne a noble part. It is to a Frenchman, Anquetel de Perron, we are indebted for recovering the books of Zoroaster, and for indicating the course of studies through which so many modern discoveries have been made. While yet quite young, he conceived a desire for mastering the early history and antiquities of Persia and India, but at that period there was little to be found in the libraries of Europe which could satisfy the desires of a man who wished, not only to know what were the common theories upon the subject, but also, to have possession of the truth. The study of what existed in France, convinced him that if a close search were instituted some of the Sacred Books of Persia could be discovered, and in that search he spent many years of his life.

Having studied in Persia, he went also to India, to visit the "fire wor-shippers," where, after many years of labour, he was rewarded for his labours by the discovery of sundry books, relating to Zoroaster, but all of them were written in a language supposed to have been lost—the Zend. After devoting a considerable portion of his time to the study of this "unknown tongue," he felt himself at liberty to publish a vocabulary of the language, with a translation of the books he had discovered, which, although very imperfect, will ever stand as a noble proof of the earnestness with which men can work. Many years of his life were innocently devoted to this arduous task, and while engaged upon it, he never doubted that society would hail, with gladness, all the information he had been collecting; he little dreamt of the wretchedness and misery he was creating for himself, or of the character which learned men would stamp upon his writings.

Directly these celebrated books were published in Europe, they were made the butt of criticism, and met with strong, or we may say a most unprincipled and cruel, opposition. There is nothing to be urged which could justify the language used in order to cry them down, and prevent their being accepted as genuine. Sir William Jones forgot his usual gentlemanly and scholarly bearing, when he penned that letter to this earnest Frenchman, which all his after shame could not blot out as a reproach to his great memory. But what did the critics urge? What could they say about either the man or the Zoroastrian books? Nothing more than that the works and the language were vile forgeries. It was authoritatively declared that there had never been any Zend language, never any Pehlevi—except in the vile imagination of Anquetel de Perron, who had created them for the worst of purposes; and although in our own Presidency of Bombay, the Parsees lived and read their books, still every fact was denied, and the learned were "quite certain that no such tongue as the Zend had ever been written, spoken, or known." Several Continental students began to inquire into the matter, and reached the opposite conclusion; for although not blessed with our

political liberty, they enjoy more literary freedom than ourselves; still Englishmen held out, and to this day, the orthodox literary conclusion is that the Zend is a forgery. Of course there are a few individuals who maintain the contrary, but a long time must pass away before the great body of learned men will admit the error into which they plunged, and take steps for curing the evil. Meanwhile, however, the work of discovery is somewhat earnestly carried on by others, for opposition stimulates inquiry in the world of philology as much as in any other, and, as one result, we have lexicons and grammars to facilitate our study of the Zend language, and what is even more important, we have a splendid edition of the Zend books, with annotations, commentaries, and other necessary aids, all supplied by Westergaarde, the Copenhagen Orientalist, a work which, by-and-bye, will perhaps get itself rendered into English, so that all may judge for themselves, and decide fairly upon this great point. Then, too, there is the Dabistan and various Persian works coming to light, to render most important proof and assistance, and, to crown all, the tombs, monuments, and temples of Persia are now rendering up their secrets, so that we are in a fair way for eventually comprehending the main facts of Zoroastrianism, and for rendering ample justice to the olden days.

But although not fully supplied with the facts as yet, we are rich enough to form many clear and correct ideas of the man and the system, and to these we now invite the attention of our readers. Premising only that fairly and fully to understand the system and the people who believe it, one must have all the legends and miracles and other wonders related in the Zend books, for it is only by means of these that the reader can at all comprehend the spirit and meaning of Zoroaster and his teaching.

We may assume that he was born between 600 and 700 years B.C., for as Plato, writing in 400 B.C., speaks of him as ancient, we cannot name a later date. And the Persians believed that he was miraculously conceived. They have been careful to inform us that "God first created the soul of Zoroaster in a tree," which grew in a pasture in which a cow, belonging to a Mobed, was feeding. The cow eat of the tree, and the Mobed's wife eventually took of the cow's milk, and thus conceived the future teacher. A Persian writer says: "When the world had been thrown into confusion by the wicked, and "was entirely at the mercy of the demon, God willed to raise up a prophet of "an exalted dignity, which the family of Faridun was alone worthy of filling. "In those days lived a man, Patirasp, descended from Faridun, and his "wife's name was Goghdwzah, a virtuous matron, who was also of the family "of Faridun. These two persons were selected by the Almighty as the shells "for enclosing the pearl of Zardusht." But now that the Evil Spirit knew what had been done, he resolved to use his best endeavours in order that the child should never be born. Accordingly he blew upon the mother a blast pestilential, such as usually produced death, but she only fell sick, and at the same moment a voice from Heaven said to her, "Fear not, for thou shalt find "relief from these pains;" after which she was healed.* Various other plans were resorted to, but equally without success, for the mother ever heard the voice in her difficulties, bidding her to be of good cheer, "Fear not: grieve "not, for God himself is thy son's guardian; this honoured child shall be the "prophet of the just God." And so all went well, for in process of time the legions of devils were beaten off and the boy was born, but to the astonishment of all beholders, he laughed aloud immediately on entering the world, which caused his father—putative father—Puritasp, to write certain poetic

* Mirkhund, 286.

lines, and later poets entering by the aid of fancy into his feelings, inform us that he

“Said to himself, he surely must be an emanation from God.

All, with the exception of him, weep on coming into the world.”*

But the mothers of his district were jealous, when they heard of this laughter, and said one unto the other, “This meaneth no good. Go to, let us inform ‘the king, so that he may inquire, and perhaps punish this mortal.’” The king, Duran Surun, was a worker of magic, and followed after Ahriman, the Spirit of Evil, who, when he heard of the event, knew that a prophet was born, and, with the worst intentions, immediately visited the house, and drew his sword to cut off Zoroaster’s head, but Heaven withered his hand so that his purpose failed. The monarch withdrew, and informed the magicians how ill he had sped with his work, and in solemn council they resolved to destroy the child. To this end they collected together a great body of inflammable matter, which they mingled with wood and brimstone, and when all was in a blaze they seized and threw the child in, and then hastened with this intelligence to their king. But

“The devouring flame became as water,

In which peacefully slumbered the heaven-given pearl,”—

by God’s aid, the fire had no power to harm him. The weeping mother went to stir the ashes, and found her child safe; who wonders that, with a heart full joy, she bore him back to her home? As soon as the magicians heard of their having been foiled, they devised another plan which surely could not fail. They bore him away to a narrow passage between some rocks, through which herds of cattle passed on their way to water; and now surely all will go well, for the oxen will tread him to death, left as he is on the open path. But no, for a cow came in front and stood over the child, driving away with her horns any that pressed that way; but when all had passed she also joined the herd, and left the child to be found uninjured by its weeping mother on the morrow. After this, he was exposed in a narrow pass, through which horses ran; and saved from them, he was thrown into the dens of ravening wolves, whose cubs had been torn from them, in order to make them more savage. At night, when the wolves returned to their lairs, behold all their cubs are slaughtered, and there is an infant crying in their place. Surely savage nature will now prevail, and the boy will die. Not so; for again was he saved. Here are the Persian’s own words: “The chief wolf, and “the boldest of them all, having rushed on to devour Zardusht, his “mouth became closed, as though it was sewn up. At this miracle “the wolves were altogether alarmed, and seated themselves like so many “nurses around the head of the child; at the same time there also came “two sheep from the mountain region, which applied their teats, filled with “milk, to the lips of Zardusht; thus the sheep and the wolf lay down in one “place. With the morning dawn, his mother, after anxious seeking and “searching, came to that frightful place, raised up the exalted prophet, and “having poured out her gratitude to God, proceeded with exultation to her “own home.”† Thus every attempt against the life of this wonderful child failed; ‘heaven miraculously interfering to save the heaven-begotten’ from the machinations of the evil ones. From all the perils by which he was surrounded, Zoroaster was preserved to do a work in the world, the aims, spirit, and results of which we shall seek to lay bare to our readers.

P. W. P.

* Dabistan, vol. i, 218,

† Ibid, 220-221,

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXVIII.

BOHEMIA IN REVOLT.

ARCHBISHOP SBINKO having determined to purge his diocese of the Wycliffite "heresy," instituted a judicial examination of several clergymen accused thereof. It is a proof that, in despite of his teachings, Huss was not yet suspected in this matter, this he was not one among them. The case of one of them, Nicholas of Welenowitz, formed the occasion of Huss's interference. Nicholas had asserted that laymen as well as priests should be allowed to preach the gospel; he also declined swearing in the manner common then—viz.: by the crucifix, the gospels, or the saints—because he contended no oath could be taken on things created. Now, on neither of these points did Huss agree with Nicholas, but nevertheless he undertook to intercede with the Archbishop for him; but in vain, Nicholas was imprisoned for a time, and ultimately banished the diocese. Huss now wrote to the Archbishop: "What is this," exclaims he, "that men, stained with innocent blood, men guilty of every crime, shall be found walking abroad with impunity, while humble priests, who spend all their efforts to destroy sin, who fulfil their duties under your Church guidance, in a good temper, never follow avarice, but give themselves for nothing to God's service, and the proclamation of His word, are cast into dungeons as heretics, and must suffer banishment for preaching the gospel?" Thus, as was indeed inevitable, Huss had gone far beyond the Archbishop, for the one was working in the cause of Truth, the other in the interest of his cloth. Sbinko ultimately became one of Huss's worst enemies.

Huss pursues his work, and the Archbishop his; Huss becomes more and more a Wycliffite; the Archbishop sets on foot still more stringent measures to eradicate the "heresy." On the 16th July, 1410, behold, he has gathered together two hundred volumes of Wycliffe's works in his palace yard, and there, notwithstanding the prohibition of the king, and without any regard to the rights of private property (and to destroy a book then was like destroying a library now), burnt them all. Great disturbances followed this exercise of episcopal authority, ribald songs were written, and sung about the streets of Prague, in which the bishop was satirised, and more than one street contest, in which life was lost, took place. Huss now spoke forth again: "The burning of books," said he, "never yet removed a single sin from the hearts of men, but has only destroyed many truths, many beautiful and fine thoughts, and multiplied among the people disturbances, enmities, suspicions, and murders." The Archbishop accused Huss of fomenting the disturbances, and Huss appealed to the Pope to settle the dispute. A fact which shows that as yet he had not advanced so far as to question the power and authority of the Pope.

As Huss now occupied the position of Rector of the University of Prague, the dispute was, in fact, one between the Archbishop and that body, on whose behalf, rather than his own, Huss's appeal was made. Sbinko, with true priestly astuteness, sought to render this appeal nugatory, by reporting to the Pope that the University, nay, the whole State of Bohemia, was tainted with the Wycliffite heresy. The result was, that Huss's appeal remained unnoticed, and a commission was appointed by the Pope to inquire into the matter. Huss was cited to appear at Bologna, where the Pope was then residing. This he indignantly refused to do, and was supported in his refusal by the king, who called the Archbishop to account for having attached the

stigma of heresy to his dominions, and wrote to the Pope, demanding that the citation should be revoked. The Pope had not been aware, hitherto, how matters stood. But now that he found the reputed heretic was supported by the king and a large party in Bohemia, and being desirous to obtain the aid of the Bohemians in the crusade he had begun against his enemy, the king of Naples, he thought his interest required that he should comply with the wishes of the king. Sbinko complained bitterly to the king at his supporting Huss in this way, but was silenced by Wencel's retort: "So long as Master Huss preached against us of the world you rejoiced, and declared that the "spirit of God spoke in him; it is now your turn." Sbinko was preparing other measures, intended, indeed, appealing to the Emperor, but death surprised him in the midst of his designs.

Sbinko's successor was no polemic, and desired only peace; and so, for the present, Huss and the party of reform proceeded undisturbed. The next antagonist will be the Pope himself. The Pope's messengers were already on their way to preach throughout Bohemia the crusade against the King of Naples, and were the bearers of Indulgences to all who should take up arms in the papal cause, or who should contribute to the expenses of the war a certain proportion of their means. This may be looked upon as the event which first turned Huss into a thorough Reformer; it was certainly the cause of his becoming the opponent of the Papacy. Disgusted at the premium thus given to vice, he preached against the Indulgences, and denied the power of the Pope to grant them. Many who had hitherto gone with him fell off, now that he was attacking doctrine: "They are my friends," said Huss, somewhat mournfully, "but Truth is my friend, and I must "honour Truth before them." Jerome of Prague saw in this new contest a matter which called for all his energy; and he went far beyond what the prudence and good taste of Huss could sanction. He obtained possession of the Bull addressed to the University, affixed it to the back of a courtesan, and, with several hundred of the students, and a vast concourse of the people, escorted her, seated on a donkey, through the streets of Prague, while a trumpeter preceded, vociferating, "To the stake with the letters of a heretic "and a rogue!" A vast bonfire was lit in the Pranger, and the Bull was burnt.

But still the preaching of the crusade, and the trade in the spiritual merchandize of Indulgences, went on. On the 10th July, in this same year, 1412, we look into one of the churches in Prague.—Mass has been celebrated; in the place of a sermon the Papal Bull, granting plenary indulgence to all good Christians who, in person or by their gifts, shall assist the Pope in exterminating his Neapolitan enemies, has been read, and the priest has been expatiating on the goodness of the "Holy Father" in giving even the worst of sinners the chance of salvation upon such easy terms, and is telling his congregation the exact conditions upon which their past sins, and all that they may thereafter commit, will be forgiven. While yet he is speaking, three working men, John, Martin, and Stasek, by name, start up, exclaiming: "Priest! thou liest; Master John Huss has taught us better than that. "We know it is all false." The priest stands aghast; but ere he can reply the papal emissaries and their adherents have seized the three men. The next day they are brought before the city council, and condemned to death for blasphemy.

In the meantime, Jerome and the students of the University have heard of this; Huss is informed, and, accompanied by Jerome, two thousand students,

and a vast multitude of people, he repaired to the council-house, and demanded a hearing. Huss was too important a man, especially when backed by an excited mob, for this to be refused. He then declared that the fault of these men was his own; that if they deserved to die, much more did he, for he had taught them the truth they had declared; and he further stated, that if they were put to death he could not answer for the consequences. The council promised Huss that the young men should be liberated if he would prevail upon the crowd to disperse;—he committed the error of accepting the promise.

Now, while the crowd was dispersing, a messenger was dispatched for a large body of soldiers; and some hours afterwards, when a sufficient military force has arrived to overawe the people, and while Huss is anxiously waiting the fulfilment of the promise made to him, the three young men, whose lives he thought he had saved, are led, escorted by the soldiers, towards the place of execution. The news spread like wildfire, and the angry crowd grows ever larger; the students are calling the people to arms; and so threatening is the aspect of affairs, that the executioner is ordered to do his work before they arrive at the destined place. In one of the public streets of Prague the three men are put to death. The headsman then, holding up the heads of the victims, cried, "Let him who does the like expect to suffer the same fate!" A cry of defiance arose from the thousands there, "We are all ready to do the like, and to suffer the same!" It is with difficulty the military make a way for the executioner and other functionaries through the crowd, who would fain have had blood for blood.

Look! the crowd have secured the bodies of the martyrs; women are dipping their handkerchiefs in their blood, that they may preserve them as precious relics; others have fetched linen of the finest to enshroud them with. Ere long, behold a great company of the students, marching in solemn and sad procession; they lay the bodies on a bier, and convey them to Huss's Chapel. It is night; and marching through the streets of that Prague city may be seen an immense multitude bearing torches. They are on their way to Bethlehem Chapel, to escort the bodies to the tomb; there they are joined by Huss and thousands of the students. A long procession is formed, and then bursts forth from out that mighty crowd, as from the throat of one man, a grand anthem to the honour of the "slaughtered saints,"—the three martyrs whom they are bearing to the tomb; and in the midnight silence, by the weird torchlight, is heard the voice of Huss reading the solemn mass for the dead, as they lower the bodies into the grave. An ominous gloom rests on the city of Prague, and those who have been parties to the murder of the three men are by no means comfortable. A little thing will throw the city into a state of revolution.

Is this the lull before a storm? The authorities are asking themselves this question, when news arrives from Rome. The Pope's anathema maranatha has been issued against John Huss; and his interdict launched against the place which affords him shelter. Behold the city on the following Sunday! Not a church is open; the only voice of preaching heard that day is that of John Huss in Bethlehem Chapel. Henceforth, while Huss remains, no child shall be baptised, no marriage shall be made, no dead shall be buried; the Pope hath ordered it, and the priesthood are ready to obey. Angry murmurs are rapidly rising into open defiance, when King Wencel, who has hitherto supported Huss, declares he can support him no longer—the Pope must be obeyed, and the "heretic" must depart. Huss felt now the truth of the old

saying, "Put not your trust in Princes!" but he felt, too, that if revolution were to be avoided, this must be done. Well, he will withdraw for a time,—he will wait the meeting of the Council of Constance, to which he will appeal.

A little before Christmas, 1412, Huss retired from Prague to a safe retreat in the castle of one of the Bohemian nobles—the stronghold of Cracowec. Here, during the whole of the year 1413, he remained, supporting the faith of his followers by numerous letters, and, it is said, by more than one stealthy visit. In one of these letters we have a proof that that faith was his which ever inspires the souls of those who work in the cause of truth: "The 'wicked,' he says, 'have begun to lay perfidious nets for the Bohemian 'goose';* but if even the goose, which is only a domestic fowl, a peaceful bird, and which never takes a lofty flight into the air, has, however, broken 'their toils, other birds of loftier wing will break them with much greater force. Instead of a feeble goose, the truth will one day send eagles and 'falcons with piercing eye!' Yes, he had no doubt of the ultimate result of the contest with the powers of evil, even though he might be worsted in the struggle he had commenced. Nay, he hopes that he may achieve at least a partial success. His letter was prophetic; and was one expression of the presentiment, becoming daily more and more widely spread abroad, that a time of great changes would shortly dawn upon the world. The minds of men were full of these premonitions, which every reader of history knows have ever heralded the coming of every great Revolution, and which we shall have frequent opportunities of seeing were not wanting to the great religious Revolution of the sixteenth century. But now the time fixed for the assembling of the Great Council of Constance is drawing nigh, and then Huss hopes that through the Reformation which he believes it will effect, his troubles will come to an end. Alas, for him! Yet, in truth, his troubles will, indeed, ere long come to an end, though not in the way he looks for.

JAS. L. GOODING.

NOTICE.

THE FREE CHURCH, NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD STREET.

As promised in a previous number, we beg now to inform our readers that the New Hall in Newman Street, Oxford Street, to be used henceforth as the Free Church of the Society of Independent Religious Reformers, will be opened on the Evening of Tuesday the 30th instant, when A TEA PARTY AND SOIRÉE will take place there.. In the course of the evening several pieces of instrumental and vocal music will be executed; and we can promise those of our friends who will be present much pleasure, both from the first-class character of the music and its excellent execution. A printed programme containing particulars will shortly be issued. Several gentlemen will, at intervals during the evening, address the meeting on subjects connected with our progress and prospects, and the character of the work we have in hand. Tea will commence at six and the Soirée at eight o'clock. Honorary Tickets (price five shillings) maybe taken by those who may desire it. Ordinary Tickets (price two shillings, for the Tea and Soirée, and one shilling for the Soirée alone) are provided. It has been thought that by this arrangement we shall meet the views of all our friends, some of whom may not be able to be present at Tea, but can be with us during the evening. We trust all who can will come, and thus testify their desire to aid, as Religious Reformers, in the future greater success of that New Reformation already so well begun.

* This is a pun upon the name of Huss, which, in the Bohemian language, means *goose*.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

(Continued from p. 32.)

THERE are persons who believe this narrative to be historical and literally true, but only such as have not considered its details. The orthodox critics have made a sad hand of it; and were we led by their statements, we should have to believe adverse theories. For instance, the doubt has arisen whether the old prophet who told the lie was as bad as he who believed it. Fancy the condition of a man's mind who entertains a doubt upon that point! Then it is asked if the old prophet could have been any other than a regular prophet. Must we not, in order to judge of his honesty, look upon him as being all that the ordinary prophet could be? It is distinctly stated, that "the word of the Lord came to him;" and thus, according to the narrative, he was one of those who were commissioned to receive messages from Heaven. Why, then, did he deceive the other? But it matters not why he did so in presence of the greater fact, that the deceived man was not a sinner. He had been invited by the king to take refreshment, and had peremptorily refused to break his fast; then when the old prophet, appealing to the spirit of party and brotherhood in one profession, solicited him to turn back, he declined upon the same ground, and would not go back. The only way in which he could be won, was by telling him that God had commanded him to take food with a brother Seer. He broke the original command, but only in order to remain faithful to its spirit. The luxuries of the Court had no power to win him from his right path, how then could the humble fare of the old prophet tempt him? There are critics who actually speak of his having allowed himself to be led into sin by his appetite; and who assume that, had it not been for a criminal desire to enjoy the pleasures of the table, he would not have turned back. This, however, is directly opposed to the spirit of the story, for had he been led by such desires he would not have needed so much pressing. The only cause for his return lies in his believing the statement of the old prophet; and consequently it was, as he imagined, in obedience to God that he went back and took food. How, then, could he be punished for returning? He could not know that the prophet lied unto him! He was placed in the strait of seemingly having to disobey in either way he acted. He could not say that the angel had not brought the order! All that lay in his power was to do his best, in order to manifest the spirit of obedience. How, then, could he be visited by God in any form of punishment? If you were to send a child to Regent Circus upon an errand, strictly charging it not to enter the Pantheon by the way, there is no doubt of your meaning being understood, although no reasons should be given. Say, now, that, while upon the way, the child is met by a well-known messenger of his father's, who distinctly says, I am charged from your father to bid you to visit the Pantheon on your way—you must therefore do so. Can it be said that the child deserves punishment for entering? Obviously not. The whole sin lies at the door of the liar and deceiver. But in this case the deceived but honest man is made to suffer, while the guilty goes free. Was God deceived? Did not He know the innocency of the deceived man? Would He punish the victim of a fraud, while permitting the fraudulent to go free? The ancients, with their imperfect ideas of moral justice, might believe it, but we cannot.

The truth seems to be, that the whole story is a fiction. The lion standing by the dead man, looks like it; especially when we remember that men passed by who saw the beast standing, and that when the old prophet got to the spot the lion was still standing there, having neither torn the man nor the ass. It may be true, but it has the odour of a fiction. It may be believed, but not without a deal of straining. One thing, however, is quite certain, which is, that the moral government of God is not now conducted in the spirit therein conceived. The

Omnipotent does not make special victims of the obedient, and there are no valid reasons for believing Him ever to have done so.

It is somewhat difficult to trace out the reigns of the two series of kings from Solomon down to Ahab and the times of Elijah; the chronology is contradictory, and the actions are scandalous. For a chosen people, even their best friends acknowledge the Israelites were unpardonable. Both in Judah and Israel they are said to have gone after strange Gods—the Gods of the land of Syria; conduct which, as a matter of course, is severely denounced by the modern believer. Unfortunately the said believer scarcely troubles himself to inquire what “belief” really means, and does not appear to understand that men in all ages have gone after that God whom they believed to be the most powerful. So that if Judah and Israel did go after other Gods, then it is certain they had come to believe in their power. And how was that effected? If the people had seen all which Sunday-school children are taught to believe they had seen, then, how came it that they changed? The answer, that they did so because of their wickedness, falls short of its mark, and is a blunted arrow. Those who employ it, have forgotten the fact that it is not in any man’s power to change his belief from one God to another at his pleasure. The ignorant savage, who can scarcely be said upon such a subject to have any belief, is consequently, when any objective phenomena of an extraordinary character are exhibited, easily operated upon. If therefore we were even to assume that the Hebrews were in the condition of such aborigines, it is impossible to believe in the rapid changes, unless the false Gods worked greater wonders than Jehovah.

It appears, however, that the Hebrews troubled themselves very little about God, their business lay chiefly in war and plundering. The kings were cut-throats, who respected neither justice nor mercy. Asa, “the pious” king of Judah, acting upon the conviction that earthly allies are of service, entered into a treaty with the Monarch of Syria to beat the King of Israel. They who had seized the holy land from the rightful owners had now fallen out among themselves with the usual result, for the former victims became the victors. Asa bribed the Pagan monarch so as to win him over to the sacred cause of Judah, and so fortunate was he in this transaction that the Israelites were despoiled of several cities. It is probable that the “band of brethren” had been fighting for many years before the foreign intervention was procured. This the author of “Chronicles” endeavours to hide, for he says: “And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa. In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the Lord and of the king’s house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.”* But this could not be, for Baasha was dead in the twenty-sixth year of Asa. Evidently there was a continuing war, and when Asa had gained Ben-hadad he conceived himself to have brought it to a close, little imagining that he was opening the way for the ruin of all the tribes.

The people of Israel were but ill-prepared to meet with any foe who was more competent than their own brethren. It is probable that the wars carried on between the tribes were comparatively harmless, while those commenced by the Syrians were of a most destructive nature. But we are left in the dark as to their full extent. Their king, Baasha, was doomed; for the prophets could not forget how he had acquired the throne. As a murderer he had gained it; and it seems that as a murdered man he fell. The record is very straightforward: “And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin. And Baasha, the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to

* 2, Chron. xv. 19—xvi. 1-3,

"the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. Even "in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his "stead." * This reads like the record of a murder; and judging from what is said in a subsequent verse, that the Lord was angry with Baasha, because he killed NADAB, this would appear to have been the case; but, as is usual in these books, there is a contradictory statement. For instance, it is set forth that Baasha incurred the anger of Jehovah, and was therefore to be blotted out. "The word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, "Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people "Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people "Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; Behold, I will take away "the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy "house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Him that dieth of Baasha "in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the "fowls of the air eat. . . . So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in "Tirzah; and Elah his son reigned in his stead."† Now, if it be true that God had exalted Baasha to be king of Israel, it must be conceded that the getting rid of Nadab was but part of the plan. The anger expressed is not, primarily, because of the murder, but because of leading Israel to sin in the matter of idolatry. But, however this may be, it is certain; he was doomed, and his house with him. His son Elah succeeded to the throne, and reigned two years. He appears to have been utterly incompetent for performing the duties, and capable only of the pleasures of a monarch. "And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired "against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza "steward of his house in Tirzah. And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, "in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his "stead."‡ So that it was while Elah was engaged in gratifying a passion for liquor, that he was cut off without a show of mercy, but he who did the murder was not long in waiting for the punishment. It was true that Elah was unfit to govern, but Zimri was no better; he could kill a king, but that is quite another thing from becoming a king. All the genius he exhibited was of the old fashion among monarchs. "And it came to pass, when he began to reign, "as soon as he sat on his throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha; he "left him not one neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends. "Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word "of the Lord, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the Prophet."§ Thus, as the Calvinist Divines say, "the wicked Zimri was used by the Lord, "in order to accomplish His purposes; still, although the Lord had purposed "the destruction of Baasha and his house, the sin of Zimri was equally "as great as if he had murdered innocent men." They are ready to prove this, and, doubtless, for any man who is satisfied with words, mere words, without thinking of the principles they involve, their Jesuitical mode of converting black into white is perfectly satisfactory. ZIMRI was not popular, and the people did not ratify his action, but proceeded to make OMRI king.

(To be continued.)

* I. Kings xv. 25-28.

+ Ibid. xvi. 2-4 and 6.

‡ Ibid. 9, 10.

§ Ibid. 11, 12.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.

CHAPTER X.

THE DORCAS SOCIETY.

DURING the remainder of the evening spent by Lester in the drawing-room at Rose Hall he obtained a considerable amount of information from the ladies—more especially from Miss Margery—respecting the condition of his poorer parishioners, and about the nature of the various societies then in existence, whose professed aim was to reduce the measure of human suffering. The claims of the Dorcas Society were particularly pressed upon his attention, as deserving of the highest credit for its aims and its active spirit of benevolence. He was solicited to employ his influence, in order to induce his sister Ella to join that charitable body of Christians immediately after her arrival; and having promised to do this, he proved equal to his word, for, before she had been a full month at the rectory, an evening arrived upon which, according to the previous arrangements, she was to be introduced, at one of their regular meetings, to the ladies of the society.

Ella had come to Crosswood, not merely to act as her brother's house-keeper, but to perform those duties also which belong to the wives of the clergy. Fond of reading and meditation, she thought little of parties or pleasuring; indeed, beyond the precincts of the garden, she cared not to move from the house; but having resolved upon breaking through her retired habits, so as to attend to all the regular duties, and to satisfy all the claims upon her attention, she had already learnt a great deal of the poorer inhabitants and their ways. And it was pleasant to notice how speedily she made her way into their good graces. Not that she had given much away, for she was rather chary of giving, but there was something in her natural, homely, unaffected manner of addressing them which completely won their hearts, and converted her into a general favourite.

This, probably, may be accounted for by the fact, that whenever she

went out visiting the poor she took her heart, her human sympathies, and her natural cheerfulness with her. There was no formality about the style in which she addressed them; and when she wished to give advice, somehow it was managed in such a way as to prevent the recipient from perceiving the full measure of his or her indebtedness. Instead of commanding, instead of saying, You must do this or that! she simply suggested a course, or asked, Do you not think it would be better to do so and so? This was especially grateful to their feelings, for when her advice was acted upon, the people always felt themselves perfectly free; they had been led to perceive the propriety of the thing, instead of being driven to it, and hence the greater readiness with which they did it. But in such cases there was no credit assigned to her; but that was no stumbling-block, for all she cared about was, that the right thing should be done; whether herself or some other had the praise, never cost her a moment's thought. And as to her not giving much away, it was soon generally known that Miss Ella was very liberal in severe cases, a fact which made even those content who had not received a gift from her bounty. It was her doctrine, that the poor do not stand in so much need of gratuities as they need being properly and judiciously instructed regarding how to use wisely that which they have earned. And, without having read Carlyle, she was not favourable to the action of large societies; but more inclined to rely upon the labours of independent persons. Yet coming to Crosswood as she had done, it became necessary for her, at once, to join those societies, at least, which were supported by her brother's congregation. The Dorcas was one of them, and she was now about to be initiated.

The nature of Dorcas Societies, although established in nearly every English town, is not generally known, and yet they deserve to be better understood. It appears that in the times of the Apostles, there was dwelling at Joppa a woman, named in the Syriac, "Tabitha," which, in the Greek, is rendered Dorcas, signifying doe or roe—perhaps "Gazelle" is nearer to the original meaning. This woman was full of good works, and appears to have been zealous in making coats and various garments, for widows and others, who were poor. Evidently her days were passed in labours of love, and when she died there was great mourning for her death. The poor had lost an unostentatious friend, a quiet steady worker, who told no tales of all the good she did, but went earnestly on as if life was too short for talking about such small matters. It is one of the problems of the nineteenth century, whether, if she had been alive to-day, she would have founded a society in order to get her work done and spoken of—whether she could have gone on in silence, performing her part, unknown to all save God and the poor. We incline to the belief that the latter would have been her course, and consequently that she must have become a marked woman; one of those who are known as "odd bodies," but who are always busy with some practical good work.

The Crosswood Dorcas Society was somewhat sectarian. In many English towns it is the custom to admit all those ladies who can find a friend to introduce them, and who are known by the members to be respectable persons. Thus, it frequently happens, that a lady who attends one of the Methodist Chapels, sits busily engaged in repairing an old petticoat, beside another who attends the Church, and who may, for the time, be employed in repairing some old dress. The theory is, that all the members shall devote the evening to needlework for the benefit of the poor; that they shall be so

many 'Dorcasess,' whose only aim in collecting together is to do good. But unhappily, the theory is seldom perfected in fact. Ladies assemble together who are rather more disposed to retail the scandal of the neighbourhood than to darn worn-out stockings; they repair one rent in a garment and make ten in a reputation; they patch up the old clothes so as to render them respectable, and take ten characters to pieces so as to render them worthless. Thus, all their charity being exhausted upon the clothing, they have none left as a medium through which to look at the actions of their neighbours and equals. If they attend the meetings, being full of love when entering, they are pretty sure to return home full of some other spirit.

The Crosswood Dorcas Society laboured under the double disadvantage of being sectarian and given to scandal. The members belonged to the National Church, and thus, as Mrs. Straddles, the secretary, said, "it was possible for ladies to attend without incurring the danger of being led away by deceitful tongues to join the ranks of vulgar dissent." She was present this evening, and quite prepared to introduce Ella to the ladies of the society, a task which she performed with no slight degree of self-content, based probably upon her conviction that "nobody else could manage it so nicely."

Ella had scarcely got her needle fairly in motion, repairing an old cap, before the buzz of conversation, which had been hushed by her entrance, became loud again, and Mrs. Mellrake suggested that "it was a pity nothing was being done in Crosswood to promote the African movement."

"For my part," she continued, "I think it is impossible to do too much of the Lord's work. He has done so much for me that I know I ought to be doing something for the Africans. They must lead a wretched life, bowing to idols of wood and stone, and eating the Missionaries."

"Eating the Missionaries!" cried a dozen voices, "surely they are not so utterly depraved as to eat a person who has gone out among them to lead them to Jesus."

It was Ellen Wilkins, the wine-merchant's daughter, who added the latter charitable doubt to the general exclamation of surprise, but Mrs. Mellrake was positive upon the point, and so there was nothing left but to inquire what could be done to improve the moral condition of such un-Christian savages.

After the subject had been duly debated, the prevailing opinion seemed to be that the only means of cure lay in "sending out more men to teach the gospel;" or, more literally, sending out more human provender for the natives.

"In that," said Mrs. Oricson, "we have the only efficient means of achieving our glorious object."

Ella had listened to the observations made by her companions, but sat silent at her work until Margery Poinder pressed her to say what she thought upon the subject. This, however, was what Ella desired to avoid; for, although when conversing with her brother or Doctor Moule, her words flowed freely, she was always alarmed at speaking before a crowd. Her evident hesitation caused Margery to believe she desired to conceal her opinions; which notion made her press Ella all the more earnestly to speak, and she succeeded in achieving her aim.

"I believe," said Ella, "that the gospel is not a sort of medicine for every social and moral disease, but a means of good which never fails when proper preliminary steps have been taken. It seems to me that the natives of Africa cannot understand the gospel any more than a child can understand the solar

system. They may be taught, like parrots, to repeat some gospel sentences, but so far as I have yet heard, they cannot comprehend the meaning of what they utter."

"But, Miss Lester," interposed Mrs. Mellrake, "if they are taught the gospel, God will enable them to understand it. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He brings forth praise, and therefore we ought to believe that He will give the Africans light."

"Perhaps so," rejoined Ella, "and it may be that I do not properly understand the matter, but I know that while yet a child, I had no real conception of the gospel-meaning, and as God does not work miracles to enable us, in our childhood, to understand it, I see no cause to believe He will do so with the African. He is surely as good unto us as unto them; and if so, then, perhaps instead of doing so much merely in missionary efforts, we should advance our cause more by adopting those means through which the Aborigines may be intellectually fitted for comprehending the gospel, just as is done with ourselves."

Had one of the African savages suddenly made his appearance in their party, he would not have caused more astonishment than was created by this speech of Ella's. The ladies were convinced that a grave doubt had been cast upon the practical and working value of the gospel, and yet Ella had not intended to do anything of the kind. She knew that it would be utterly impossible to make a full-grown Norfolk ploughman comprehend the philosophy of Hamilton by merely preaching it to him, and felt that, as all sciences require for their comprehension some preliminary training, so also the mind of the African must be trained into habits of abstract thought before he can become capable of understanding the Christian system. But the ladies of the Crosswood Dorcas Society only knew that system as the majority of persons know Astronomy, as a set of words, as a form of worship; for, like many others, they had never reflected their way into its heart and deeper meanings.

Mrs. Maitland, the churchwarden's wife, a fat, inquisitive, pock-marked, Christian woman, was the first to break the silence of astonishment, by observing—

"Then, my dear Miss Lester, as you don't approve of missions, it must be a sad trouble when you sit and listen to your dear brother preaching a missionary sermon; for of course he believes in them—does he not?"

"Or, perhaps, Miss Lester, you make a point of not attending church on such occasions?" said the lady secretary.

Ella looked surprised, and could hardly realise that her words had been so falsely construed. Without, however, deigning to explain her meaning more minutely, she made matters worse by answering, "It is too much to say that I don't believe in missionary enterprises, because, in truth, I am friendly to them; but I have long believed that through doing so much abroad we fail in performing properly our home work. If all our willing hands were well employed here in England—if we all taught the ignorant, reasoned with the dissolute, and dealt mercifully, as well as sternly, with the erring—our seamen and merchants would become practical missionaries, for their honesty and kindness would beget a better feeling in the breasts of foreign races, and through that, the religious teaching of all Englishmen would be believed. Let us labour earnestly to move the ignorant masses at home, and abroad our influence for good will be greatly increased."

"That is just what I feel," put in Miss Lowther, a lady of public spirit,

and full of thorough English feeling; "I more than doubt the propriety of sending hundreds of people and millions of pounds across the water to teach the poor natives, when we send so much rum in the holds of the same ships, and so many seamen who are no better, but, in many senses, much worse than the savages. And the more I think about it, the more am I convinced that we should take the advice a courtier once gave the king of Spain, 'to make his own subjects the happiest among the nations, after which he would probably be called to rule all Europe.' If we teach our own people, so as to render them respectable, they will go everywhere to buy and sell and deal justly, which would make them the truest missionaries."

The company was astonished to hear Miss Lowther speak so resolutely, for although an old member, she had never before been heard to say so much, and had been called "silent Jane." The fact was, however, that her heart was well-disposed, and her intellect was of a superior order; hitherto, although regularly attending the meetings, she had not heard much to interest her mind; but when Ella gave utterance to "the dangerous sentiments," as Mrs. Straddles called them, then truth struck her mind so forcibly that she could not avoid speaking as she had done.

Several ladies expressed themselves as much astonished that the propriety of a course of action should be doubted which had the approval of so many good men, while others were of opinion that the aborigines were such interesting creatures that it was impossible to avoid being greatly moved in their behalf. The ice having been broken, Ella no longer felt any hesitation in speaking, and still more astonished the company by saying,

"I never was much interested in their behalf, and I never felt that affection for them which others feel. Some of my friends are powerfully moved by the condition of the negroes, and seem to be greatly delighted when they can get a gentleman of colour to dine with them at a party; but their presence always makes me feel uncomfortable, almost as much so as if it were an instinct of my nature to avoid their company."

"Don't you think that very wicked?" whispered Miss Andante—a very delicate young lady of nineteen—to her neighbour.

"I think it is quite right," continued Ella, "to prevent their being ill-used and carried into slavery, but beyond that, all my feelings lead me to dwell upon the savagery and sin, the suffering and ignorance of our own people, and I would rather receive one pound from a friend to be applied to good purposes at home, than I would take ten to be employed in African missionary enterprises. It seems to me to be more natural, as well as more likely to accomplish some practical good."

A young lady—Miss Magdelene Knacker—who had silently listened to the conversation, strongly objected to that view of the case, "because there was always so much amusement at the missionary meetings."

"If there were no foreign missionaries, then," said she, "the meetings would certainly be given up, and in that case my brother will never attend any of our religious gatherings. He always comes to the missionary meetings, and tells papa that he enjoys them quite as much as a play."

In that he was no exception, for there is a large class of persons who attend such gatherings merely to hear the strange anecdotes related by the missionaries who form the deputation. And it is remarkable what a difference it makes in the collections when a few good-humoured, merry speeches are made, in which a number of anecdotes, showing the heathen to be stupid, are thrown in. Of course, those who subscribe do so purely on account of their

"love to the cause"; still the fact is patent, that when there is an abundance of fun the collections are larger.

The allusion made by Miss Knacker to the drama was followed by a general tossing of the head; for although many of the ladies, when in London, were in the habit of visiting the theatres, they were not pleased with such an allusion being made to plays in a Dorcas Meeting. This seemed to divert their attention from the strong remark made by Ella, for, without alluding to her plea in favour of looking at home, Mrs. Mellrake hoped that her young friend, Miss Knacker, did not believe there was any likeness between missionary meetings and "stage plays—wicked plays."

"I cannot understand," she continued, "however people can name them both in the same breath; they may as well speak of our Dorcas Meetings as if they were the meetings of a common earthly club."

It appeared from the statement of the secretary, that this height of profanity had been already reached by certain choice spirits belonging to Crosswood, who, as she said, "had actually stated, that they who met did so more for their own gratification than as prompted by the desire to promote the comfort of the poor."

The libellous, ungrateful wretches!

Ella was not certain of there being any libel in the case. She had observed that, during the conversation, which seldom flagged, there were not many stitches set. A good needlewoman would have done all the work accomplished that evening by the twenty ladies. Ella saw that, and hence the spice of satire in her tone, when she asked to be informed of how many garments were annually given away, and what, in other ways, was the measure of good achieved by the society.

The gentle but meaning irony of her tone and manner smote their ears unpleasantly, because it clearly indicated a doubt of the soundness of the system; and this caused them all to listen with satisfaction to Mrs. Maitland, who, in her solemn tones, intimated that the society kept no exact account of the number of garments distributed; and that, as far as good was concerned, there was no doubt far more was done for the people of Crosswood than they deserved.

"Ladies," said she, with a marked emphasis upon the first word, "Ladies give their time to needlework for the benefit of a set of people who are far more ungrateful and wicked than any of the Africans we were just now speaking of. They are a hard-hearted, drunken, impudent, infidel set, and when I look around to see the number, and think of the quality of the ladies who are here working for them, I am astonished at the largeness of their charity, and almost in doubt if human nature be so depraved as I believed it to be. The people do not deserve anything, and yet they get everything done for them."

"My experience among them has been too short to enable me to judge correctly of their characters," said Ella, "but from what I have seen, I am astonished at what you say. They appear to me to be tractable and willing to listen to advice. I have not been unkindly received or rudely answered, but, of course, being still a stranger, my reception may have been better than it will be when I am better known."

That seemed to be the general opinion, and each lady had some particular person to speak of as likely to cause Ella a deal of trouble.

"It was but the other day," said Miss Knacker, "that I went into Johnson, the infidel's cottage, while he and his family were at dinner. Of

course I felt it to be my duty to warn him against the evil of his ways, and when I told him that he was training up his family for the lake of fire and brimstone, he actually laughed in my face, and said in his vulgar way, 'Now young woman, please to talk about the weather, or dresses, or balls, or something else that you know about. Don't do the lake and brimstone business here, for you don't know nothing about that no more than I do.'

The listeners were very much shocked at this gross profanity, but they all had some similar story to tell.

Miss Andante stated, that having left a tract upon 'Certain Redemption' with Stokes the shoemaker, before she had gone far he called her back, and said, 'it was no use leaving papers like that, but if she had any sensible ones to lend him, he would be much obliged by the exchange.' "And," she continued, "when I told him that the tract he held in his hand would do good to his soul, he said, 'Ah, Miss, I dare say that is what you believe, but I don't. And I know it would be much better if you were sitting down to learn something useful, so that afterwards you could go about and teach poor people, instead of wasting your time running up and down with papers of no use to any body. As to this kind of 'Certain Redemption,' it won't suit me. I never had any more than I worked for, and I don't want more. I don't want any body to bear the burden of my sins, for all that I had the heart to do, I've got the heart to suffer for, if there must be any suffering.'"

"That is just like that infidel Stokes," said Mrs. Maitland, who by the way was utterly unconscious of the nobleness shadowed forth in this declaration. "But I was told last week at a cottage that if I wanted people to be honest I should leave off delivering tracts, and when I asked how they could make people dishonest, the impudent woman told me they made people tell a pack of lies. She said that when we called to ask if they had read what we left, the people often answered 'Yes,' to please us, when the truth was they had never even looked at them before they were called for."

Mrs. Straddles, the secretary, was bursting with her story. She always had worse pains than other people, always had heavier trials, and now she had the following more terrible story.

"I called at a cottage last week to see why the little girl had not been sent to our Church School, and found the father at home reading an old newspaper. On asking him why he was not working, he grumbled out that he had no work to do. Seeing that he was very sour and discontented, I told him it was time he should look to Jesus, and be humble in his hour of trial. I thought he would have struck me, so savage was his glance, but nothing daunted, I bore my testimony to the fact, that if he were meek and lowly, and prayerful, and made the patience of Jesus his example, God would provide for all his wants. He got up and walked round the room as angrily as a bear would have done, then he stopped before me and said: 'I don't doubt, Missus, as how you means well enough, but I can tell you I've had a world of patience, but it's all gone now. I have prayed and prayed again, but it never brought me the provision people talked about, and so I just don't believe it. Rich folks believes it 'cause they have got nothin' else to do, but it don't suit a poor man like me, and as to lookin' to Jesus for an example, it seems to me to be no use at all. He never had a wife down with the fever, six hungry children in the house, and no work to do.'

I fled from the house," continued Mrs. Straddles, "lest the beams should fall and crush me, for what could I think God would do with such a dreadful man?"

Nobody seemed inclined to say what she should think, and it would have been lost time had any reasonable person done so. Her notions had been cast into a particular orthodox mould, which could not be changed; but Ella, although considerably shocked, had resolved upon visiting the persons who had been alluded to. She wholly admired their candour, and seemed to believe them worthy of every attention. Nor was her intent concealed, for when asking their names and addresses, she intimated it to be her intention to visit them.

At the usual hour the meeting broke up, and as Ella was upon her way home with Miss Lowther, who lived close by the rectory, she managed to discover that that lady was quite as much opposed to the Dorcas system as any of its worst opponents could be.

"I am glad," said she, "that you spoke so plainly about the missionary system, for, in truth, we require to amend our ways, both in dealing with savages abroad and at home. And as to our Dorcas Society, I am sure they are right who doubt if any good comes out of it; at least, very little is accomplished compared with what would be done if each member spent the time at home, working for some well-known destitute person."

"It strikes me," interposed Ella, "that most of the evening is wasted in idle planning and useless talk."

"Ah, but you have heard nothing yet. The conversation this evening has been vastly superior in its tone to what it usually is. Sometimes we have a continued series of unkind criticisms upon the dresses worn at church on the previous Sunday; and at others, it is made up of cruel scandal; in fact, the evening is devoted to detraction. Still one is obliged to bear with it, for when any member withdraws there is sure to be some unpleasant story put into circulation against them, and one does not like to be the burden of a thousand tongues."

"It is not desirable," said Ella, "but if the meetings prove to be as useless in the future as they now appear to my mind to be, I for one shall not attend them. My good brother says, that where we cannot carry our hearts we should not mock God by presenting our bodies. And I could not do it; indeed, say what they may, I shall not attempt it."

Miss Lowther understood this as a sort of rebuke, but resented it not. She was a generous and easy soul, anxious to do good, but rather timid when in presence of Mrs. Grundy. This weakness, however, she was quite as conscious of as others were; and that night, before retiring, she inwardly resolved upon endeavouring to cleave close unto Ella, as one who could impart somewhat of the spirit wherein she was lacking.

LIFE AND TEACHING OF ZOROASTER.

§ 3.—INITIATION INTO LIFE.

WE are told that the magicians who had aimed at Zoroaster's life were filled with despondency, and when assembled together and spoken to by one of their chiefs, they seem to have readily assented to his teaching to the effect that Zardusht could not by them be destroyed; very properly too, and as the reader will admit not very surprising, after all the proofs they had had. But there are some who declare the most surprising thing to be that anybody could believe such stories as those of the Zoroastrian babyhood, for believed they were, and still are, by many of the now Mahometan part of the Persian people, as also by all the Parsees of India. They believe, and even express astonishment that Christians hesitate about doing so. When

missionaries tell them that it is wrong to believe such stories, the learned ask, Why, then, do you believe about the three children in the fiery furnace, and Daniel in the lions' den? Their answer is, that "there is a great difference between the cases;" but failing to perceive it the Parsees remain unchanged, and are not likely to abandon one for the other.

But although the magicians had thus been beaten, we are not to believe our hero had no other dangers to pass through. A man learned in the stars was called upon to explain how it was that this boy had escaped so many and great dangers, and he answered, "Thy son, Zardusht, will become a chief, as all the happy spheres afford him aid; this offspring of auspicious career will conduct the creatures of God in the true way, he will promulgate the book of life, he will destroy the demon and enchanters, and finally King Gushtasp shall embrace his faith." The father felt great delight on hearing this favourable account, and seems to have conceived the idea that all the serious difficulties were at length over, but in truth they had hardly begun. There dwelt near their home an aged saint, who desired to enjoy the honour of educating this prodigy, and the father consented. The work went on, and the magicians again tried. They wrought many wonders in the boy's presence, which some believed would frighten him, but in this they were disappointed. But shortly after, hearing that he was ill, they went to see him, taking deadly drugs, which they presented. But he saw through their evil designs, and said, "I know of what ye have mixed with the potion, and even should you conceal your violence under another form, deceitful as you are, I shall recognise your aims, for that God who made and preserves all things, that God gives me warning and will preserve me."

And now, according to the narratives, he sometimes entered into debates. One day his father made a feast, to which many magi were invited, and when the feasting had ended he said to the chief magician, "Through the excellence of enchantment, whereby our hearts are gladdened and our heads exalted, thy noble person is at this period the spiritual guide of all magicians." But Zardusht, who stood by, rebuked his father for this double piece of falsehood and flattery, saying, "that unless he abandoned such ideas and turned to the Faith of God, Hell would be his portion and that of all enchanters." We are not told what his father thought of this sally, but only of the Archimagus, who felt his cloth insulted, and spake accordingly, "Of what consequence art thou before thy father? The intelligent of the earth, and the greatest men of the habitable world dare not address such language unto me. Art thou not afraid of me? Dost thou not know me? For this, thy insolence, I shall give such an account of thy doctrines that thou must ever remain in deep obscurity. And what is thy power that, without courtesy, thou darest slight my dignity?"

"May thy name be more degraded than that of all other men!"

"May no desire of thy heart ever be accomplished!" *

Such was the pious prayer with which the Archimagus closed his speech, and Zardusht mildly replied, "Oh, son of earth, the falsehoods thou mayest utter respecting my religion, both before God and man, will render thee the butt of censure, and in retaliation I shall speak nothing but truth of thee, and overpower thee by just proofs and arguments, for by order of God I shall overthrow thine empire." We are told that after this passage of words the magician left the house under great excitement, hastening home covered with confusion and disgrace. "That night he fell sick, and his

* Dabistan, vol. i., 238.

"people also being attacked by illness at the same time, were hurried along "with him to the house of retribution." Men were astonished at the great intellect and boldness of such a stripling, and wondered among themselves what all these things could mean. For see, he is only in his twelfth year, and yet has put to flight the great and the learned; was ever the like known before? Surely not, and yet this and much more has to be seen, heard, and believed before the end cometh, for as yet morning is not, but only dawn, and the promise of its coming. But the old books record other matters than these about the sage. For instance, here is a picture of him in his fifteenth year:—"When the honoured age of Zardusht had reached his fifteenth year, "he attached not his heart to this place of sojourn, neither did he set any "value on the world or its concerns: but fleeing away from wrath and the "pleasures of sense, he, with pious fear, laboured night and day in the service "of God. Whenever he found any one hungry, thirsty, naked or helpless, "he bestowed on them food, raiment, and the needful supplies; his piety "and sincerity were constantly renowned amongst all people, although he "retired from the public gaze."

Here, then, is the oasis in the desert, the one green spot to rest upon, where real life and lofty thoughts may again be born to bless mankind. Here once more we begin to have full assurance of a man who formed his own mind, and battled greatly against the hardships of early life. All these wonders, all these victories and marvellous hair-breadth escapes from the imminent deadly breach, all these we will take at their real worth, and say, this man born in poverty, and having through great difficulties to fight his way upward, not only accomplished that task, but also got distinct ideas about man's relation to man. That there were other ways to happiness than through the patronage of courtiers and the wealthy he had learned; had learned, not doubtless in a very easy way, that even gold was not grandly essential to true blessedness, and had learned that to effect great good, needs greatness of resolve and self-sacrifice. He stands before us, tall, well-formed, and of commanding aspect. About his countenance there are flashes of humour mingled with sadness, and his eye burns with the fire of sympathy and hope. Wrong is daily done, and he has grown angry at it; injustice sits crowned, and iniquity wears the purple. Will no one speak, where so many both see and know what should be spoken and done! Alas, no, for they can endure and complain, they can bear away the heavy burdens, but beyond that they see not what should be done. They will bow to that which in their hearts they hate; they will swim with the tide and help their fellow mortals into the mire. But he will not do that thing, and come what may, he will die a man. They may kill him, it is true, but to the hour of death he can be a man despite all.

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXIX.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE.

THE universities and the great doctors were the chief representatives of the Church Reform movement, which culminated in the calling together of the Council of Constance. They knew not that the day had gone by for the fruition of their hopes; for beyond the body which required reform, there were now comparatively few who would aid in aught the object of which was to make the Priesthood strong again. That this was one, if not the chief, of the objects of the Reform now attempted within the Church is certain. Ulterior

events proved this. The mere negative reform they contemplated, even if successful, could not disarm the opposition which had grown up. They had hoped much, in the first instance, from a settlement of the papal dispute; to effect this the Council of Pisa was called. In the year 1410 had been assembled in the Cathedral Church at Pisa, "twenty-two cardinals, four patriarchs, about "two hundred bishops, the four generals of the mendicant orders, the deputies "from two hundred chapters, and thirteen universities, three hundred doctors, "and ambassadors from several courts." A goodly assemblage—did they effect the object? They called upon the rival Popes to submit to the supreme authority of the Council. This these worthies had promised to do, but stipulated for a personal interview, in order that the terms of their mutual cession of power should be settled, and the cession of both be simultaneous. But this interview never took place; excuse after excuse was made to delay the meeting, until, at last, the Council would wait no longer. They had accordingly declared both Popes contumacious, passed a resolution deposing them, and proceeded to the election of a new Pope. "So," says Michelet, "instead of two Popes, there were three; that was all!" That, in fact, was the sum total of the work effected by the Council of Pisa; and three Popes, instead of two, still further divided and distracted the allegiance of Christendom. The Pisan Pope died shortly after his election, but it was necessary to elect another in his place, in order to support the authority of the Council; that other was John XXIII., one of the greatest monsters of vice who had ever been elected to the Papacy. Meanwhile Wycliffe has come to life again in the person of John Huss; English Lollardism is growing ever stronger; Bohemia is in revolt against the Church; the spirit of defection is everywhere.

In 1414, the Council of Constance meets, its objects being: (1.) The Union of the Church under one acknowledged Pope; (2.) The Reformation of the Clergy in its head and members; (3.) The extirpation of erroneous and heretical doctrines. Sigismund, the Emperor of Germany, whose influence has been largely used in calling this Council, has intimated to his brother, the King of Bohemia, that Huss should be sent to Constance. He has also informed Huss that he will furnish him with a safe conduct, and make sufficient provision for his being heard in his own defence before the Council, and that, if he shall object to submit to the decision of the Council, he will send him back unharmed to Bohemia. Huss was only too ready to obey. Once more, then, we see him in Prague, bidding adieu to his friends, before starting for Constance. "God be with you!" says one of his congregation, Andrew, by name, a working man, "God be with you, Master John! for hardly, think "I, wilt thou get back again unharmed, dearest Master John, and most "steadfast in the truth. Not the King of Hungary, but the King of Heaven, "reward thee with all good, for the good and true instruction which I have "received from thee." Huss, however, hopes better things.

On the 11th of October, 1414, Huss set out on his journey to Constance. With him were the two Bohemian knights, Wenzel of Duba, and John of Chlum, who had undertaken to defend him from injury on the way. The kindly reception which he met with in the various German towns through which he passed on his way, shows that a reformatory spirit had already begun to take root in the minds of the German people, even to the extent of honouring an excommunicated heretic. In Nuremberg, the ancient seat of the "Friends of God" (whose acquaintance we shall hereafter make, with others), he met a hearty welcome. The news of his coming had arrived

before him, and large bodies of the people came out to meet and escort him into the city. In the little town of Pernaü, the parish priest called on him at his lodging, and declared that he was glad to have the opportunity of greeting a man whose life and teaching he admired. These are things so-called history too frequently looks entirely aside from; but they are indications of no small value in tracing the gradual growth and development of the after great historical movements, which were to create a new era for the world. At every place he passed through, Huss posted up notices offering to give to any one who desired it any explanation regarding his religious teachings; and, in consequence of this, while in Nuremberg, he was informed, when at dinner, that several of the citizens would speak with him: they were accompanied by several masters in theology, who, when Huss began to speak, proposed that the laity should be dismissed. "Nay, nay!" said Huss, "I have always testified of the truth openly, and mean to do so still. The truth is as much for the laity as for the clergy." And none were dismissed. Here spoke the true champion of religious freedom.

Meanwhile the city of Constance has been for some months past the point of attraction for all the world of Christendom. Day after day there have been fresh arrivals; now a body of doctors from some of the various universities, clad in the black costume of their office, their pale and shrunken faces telling of hard study and much thought; now a mitred abbot, with a train which would have done honour to a prince; bishops, and priests, and monks; soldiers, and merchants, and citizens; princes, and barons, and knights; cardinals, and papal legates, and ambassadors from the several courts; until, it would seem, so full is the city, so thronged every road leading thereto, that for all who are coming no room can be found. But the city seemed to enlarge itself to meet the occasion. For months they have been arriving from all quarters, and November is at hand. The Pope is now expected to open the Council. On the 3rd of November is seen entering the gates of Constance, a thin, pale, spare man, dressed in a priest's habit, and with four attendants; a noble brow tells of intellect more than ordinary, while his manner bespeaks a kindliness and affability which would not willingly offend any honest man: that is John Huss. A few hours after, the Pope, John XXIII, arrives. The next morning the Emperor and he will open the Great Council, say some; but no, they have been waiting for the Pope, they will now have to wait for the Emperor. Sigismund arrived not for two months after that.

No real work, therefore, will be done just yet. Meanwhile we take a look into the city, where are gathered together so much accredited piety, virtue, and honour. 'Tis true, that bishops, and abbots, and clergymen are there; but there are mountebanks, and jugglers, and courtezans too. "Nor was it merely the temporal lords and knights," says Ullmann, "the merchants and tradesmen congregated in the place, who gave themselves up to dissipation. On the contrary, we read of the clergy, from the highest to the lowest rank, indulging in debauchery of all sorts, dressing in the most vain and worldly manner, and treating with ridicule the exhortations to repentance addressed to them by the austere preachers, of whom there were some also present."* Tournaments and theology, debauchery, dissolute companionship, and doctrinal discussion, word-battles and battles of swordfence, buffoonery and blackguardism, all find their adepts and representatives there, and are resorted to to while away the passing hours. But where is Huss in the midst of this? In close retirement, diligently

* *Reformers before the Reformation*, I. p. 187.

studying and writing; for, relying upon the Emperor's promise that he shall be permitted to speak before the assembled Council, he is now fitting himself to do justice to the truth he means to speak, and is preparing several discourses for delivery on the occasion. So for the first three weeks his time is occupied; but imprudent friends are busy, and malignant enemies, too; a report is spread abroad by the former that on a certain Sunday he will preach in Constance (as they hope to induce him to do), and, by the latter, another rumour is industriously spread that Huss is about to escape. Why does not the Emperor come? sighs poor Huss. Alas! for thee, before the Emperor comes they will have thee safe in prison.

On the twenty-fifth day after his arrival Huss was deprived of his liberty, by the order of the Pope, in spite of the safe conduct of the Emperor. In prison he will lie a whole month before the Emperor comes. But then! aye, then, 'his enemies will shrink back dismayed, and the noble Sigismund will 'redeem his plighted troth.' So thinks John; too honest himself to doubt the honesty of a word so strongly pledged. So thinks the good knight of Chlum, who has been biting his teeth with rage during all that month. On Christmas Eve, when the Emperor's arrival is momentarily expected, Chlum posts up in the public street a certificate, declaring, in the most emphatic language, that the Pope and Council have insulted the Emperor by defying his commands, and depriving Huss of liberty. And so sure is the honest warrior of his liege lord the Emperor's fidelity, that he makes no scruple of stating that if Huss be not set at liberty the Emperor will force open the prison. Has not the Emperor told him as much? Aye, that he has; for Chlum, in his great love to Huss, has even been to personally report to the Emperor the proceedings in Constance. And what says the Emperor, now that he has come? Why he even lets Huss remain where he is. There are some who apologize for this forsworn traitor, and tell us that, had he insisted upon Huss being set at liberty, the object for which the Council was called would have been defeated; that the Pope would have taken advantage of it to further his own interests, and the Council would have split upon this quarrel between Pope and Emperor. But whether a traitor with malice aforethought, or a coward, a craven, who dared not save the man he had decoyed there by false promises, let the name of the Emperor Sigismund stand for ever branded as eternally infamous.

It was on the Christmas Eve of 1414 that Sigismund entered Constance. "He rode," says the chronicler, "by torchlight to the great church, where, "with the imperial crown upon his head, he served as deacon to the Pope "whilst reading mass." A goodly sight! The next morning the Council was formally opened, and a few days after commenced its session. From the preceding November Huss had lain in prison; until the following June he had yet to lie there, sick at heart, sick in mind and body too. Not but that some of his letters, written through those dreary months, tell of a brave as well as a patient spirit. Ere long his bravery is to be tested to the utmost. Meanwhile the Council has settled the affair of the rival Popes by deposing them all three; nor have they yet, nor will they for a time, elect another in their place. The next act in the drama will be the trial and martyrdom of Huss; which, being as they were the deliberate acts of the Church in Council assembled, serve to shew of what Priestcraft, whether exercised by reforming doctors or clergymen, or by Roman Pontiffs, is capable. And, in looking at this matter in detail in our next, we shall be constantly reminded of how great a change is necessary to turn men into priests. JAS. L. GOODING.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

(Continued from p. 48.)

THE new monarch was, if we are to believe the narrative of his deeds, somewhat speedy in his movements. "And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and "all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. And it came to pass, when Zimri "saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, "and he burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died."* He had at least some dignity about him, and died bravely in the fire. But Omri was not left in peace to enjoy the throne, which he had won for his family. Strange to say, although the former monarchs had been so unsuccessful, there were many who desired to obtain the office. A man named Tibni, raised a party, and contended for the throne. "Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half "of the people followed Tibni, the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half "followed Omri. But the people that followed Omri, prevailed against the people "that followed Tibni, the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned."† Thus Omri gained the ascendancy, and he was not long without furnishing some proof of his qualities as a leader. Acting upon the conviction that a king cannot have too many friends in foreign parts, he negotiated a marriage between his son Ahab and Jezebel, daughter of the King of Tyre; and was successful in his plans for establishing a new capital—if such a term can be employed in relation to these cities. He purchased from Shemer a "fair round swelling hill," north-west of Mount Ebal, for two talents of silver (£684), which obtained the name of Samaria, and became the residence of the Kings of Israel; there they continued to reside down to the hour of the kingdom's overthrow. But Omri displeased the followers of Jehovah by his idolatry. It is said that he did worse than all those who had gone before him. "For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and in "his sin, wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to "anger with their vanities."‡ We know neither his good nor his evil deeds; he may have been the worst among evil men, but, if he were so, history has not preserved the record. He reigned over the whole of Israel about eight years, after which his son Ahab reigned in his stead.

And here, opening up one of the chapters in this Hebrew story which is so crowded with marvellous relations, we are compelled occasionally to pause for breath, and seem rather to be reading the pages of an old romancer than those which are to be classed with veritable history. This chapter § contains the life and works of the prophet Elijah, and without hesitation it is to be confessed that the story has taken firm hold of the hearts of men. In music, poetry, and painting it has been set forth with every conceivable embellishment that genius could supply, and were we only to confine ourselves to the Oratorio, there would be enough in that to justify any measure of severe condemnation of the efforts made with a view to stamp upon the mind false ideas of the past. I, too, can enjoy the noble strains, and feel myself as powerfully moved as others are who sit to listen, but why not marry noble music to noble truth? The painter, poet, and composer, have yet to learn their true mission. Why shall our poets spend their time vainly endeavouring to body forth in song the ancient life of Greece, when already it has been done so well by Homer? Let them turn to our own national life, and body that forth. Were England to perish to-morrow, in whose poetry would our national life be preserved for the enlightenment of other nations? Only in the pages of Shakespeare, and there but in part. In his historical dramas our early national life is bodied forth, and in them its spirit may be clearly realised, but since his day we have had no authors so thoroughly faithful to the poet's mission. And what of music? Are there no great events in the history of modern Europe which could be fitly mated with the highest music? Is there no life of Huss, no struggle of

* 1 Kings xvi., 17, 18.

† Ibid. 21, 22.

‡ Ibid. 20.

§ Ibid. xvii.

Savonarola, no career of Luther? Must men ever go back to the life of Israel for a worthy theme? I say not that the noble in that life should be passed over, but only that the ignoble should not be treated as noble because it happens to wear the Hebrew garb. And, indeed, if men have resolved upon having a Jewish fact as the groundwork of their composition, then let them look through the pages of Hebrew history in Modern Europe, and they will find a series of heroisms which casts all the ancient doings and sufferings into the shade as being relatively unworthy. It may seem questionable this, to the unread man, but I state it as a fact, that the history of modern Judaism is fuller of heroic details than is the ancient, and I could name men, with the long train of noble deeds they performed, and the sufferings they endured, whose life-story is infinitely superior in nobility to any of those recorded in the Bible. So that if the man of genius needs the Hebrew as a centre, he can find plenty of the really noble, and need not paint up the unworthy to pass them off for other than they were.

Elijah is first introduced, without preface or explanation, as threatening Ahab: "And Elijah, the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the 'Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain 'these years, but according to my word.' A remarkably bold prophecy that, 'No rain but according as I shall speak or command!' and yet not to be much heeded, because it comes from an unknown man. Who was Elijah? Where was he born? What were his antecedents? Was he an Israelite? The course adopted by modern theologians is to allow his Israelitish origin to be inferred—that is when writing in a popular form—but not so when writing for the scholar. Even Kiel acknowledges that he was not of any Hebrew tribe, and the language employed in the history, when properly read, places the matter beyond dispute. He was, as we are told, a "Tishbite from the residents of Gilead," which proves, as Kiel admits, "that he was not a native Gileadite, but only a sojourner in the land, and points, at the same time, to his foreign origin." Various plans have been suggested in order to get rid of this awkward fact; towns have been created, districts have been re-christened, and various other expedients employed, but all are equally valueless, for the stubborn fact still remains, that the prophet was not of the children of Israel. So that we are left wholly in the dark as to his course of training and antecedents, and can only rest upon the fact that the people called Tishbites, like many other ancient people, had some clear ideas of the Unity of God. But Ahab is supposed to have heard this declaration, unqualified as it was with any conditions, "There shall be no rain nor dew." How long, oh prophet, shall rain and dew cease? To this important question no answer is vouchsafed, for the time is left undetermined, save by the addition "but according to my "word." Now no true Israelite could believe that it rested with a mere man to determine this, because they all believed every drop of rain, and every drop of dew, to be specially sent from Heaven, under the guidance of God. As to general laws, the Israelites were ignorant of their existence. With them all was special, and they could not conceive the action of God unless as connected with immediate volition. And was there any fear went abroad amongst the people because of this bold prophecy? Did they say one unto the other, 'Behold, a great 'evil is threatened and will come upon us!' or did they fall down upon their knees and pray that the punishment should be turned aside? Our old Divines gave themselves a deal of trouble to discover an answer to these and similar questions, but seeing that the record is silent, we shall be silent also, and instead of pursuing such unprofitable inquiries, we will follow the stories and travels of Elijah, and make out, if possible, what meaning lies under the record.

According to the narrative "The word of the Lord came unto Elijah, saying, "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, "that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and "I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according "unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is "before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and "bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook." We all remember

the famous Christmas pieces, in which the artist reproduced the ravens, black as a coal, flying through the air with meat for the prophet, who, in his state robes, rather highly coloured, sat in silence by the brook. The picture was pleasing to our childhood, but will not bear the criticism of manhood. The great question is, whether in the Hebrew, "ravens" are alluded to. The birds have made a nest for themselves in our theology, but the learned are not agreed upon the point, if they have any other than an imaginary existence. Even Dr. Kitto questioned the common reading. He says, originally, all Hebrew was written, as it still is very frequently, without the vowel marks, as is the case also in Arabic, and other oriental languages. Men, when the Hebrew was a living tongue, supplied the vowels orally, in reading that which was written without them. Usage made this easy to those to whom Hebrew was a native tongue. The differences between words of like consonants was of course brought out by the interposed vowels, just as to the common consonants *grn* the sense of *grain*, *green*, *groan*, or *grin*, is fixed by the vowels added. After the Hebrew text had for many ages remained without the vowel marks, or indeed without such marks being known, they were at length, in the seventh century after Christ, invented, and inserted throughout by the Jewish doctors, to fix the pronunciation, and with it the sense,—thus insuring uniformity of interpretation, as it was feared that diversities might otherwise arise, and the true transmitted signification might be in many cases lost, through the dispersions of the people and the neglect of the language. They fixed the vowels, which determined, as it were, whether in particular places the consonants *grn* should mean *grain* or *green*, *groan* or *grin*,—bestowing thus a permanent written form on much which had hitherto rested in the memories of men, and had been distinguished only by oral usage. This was a great and noble work, and was for the most part executed with great integrity and sound judgment. But Christian scholars do not conceive that they are in every case bound to the decisions of the Masorites (as they are called); while some (fewer now than formerly) reject their authority altogether, and feel at liberty in every case to take the sense which agrees best with the context. This agreement both parties allow that the present vowel points do not always afford; and the text before us is one of those on which that question is raised. Look at the Hebrew words again. The consonants of all are the same as of the word which means "raven," and may be made plural by the usual masculine termination *im*. But the vowels make these differences between them:—The first word (left to right) is *arob*, a gad-fly; the others are *arab*, Arabian (Gentile—*Arabi*, an Arabian,—plural *Ar'abim*, Arabians); *ereb*, the woof; *ereb*, evening; *oreb*, raven. Now the Masorites assigned the sense of "raven" to the word in this case, by affixing the points which it bears, in preference to any other sense. But this, perhaps, is the last of all the senses which would occur to any one reading the Bible without the points, and without a previous knowledge of this interpretation; while, recollecting that these vowel points were added in an age when the Hebrew mind had gone astray after prodigies, and after it had given birth to the monstrous creations of the Talmud, we might expect that in such a case as this, the most marvellous interpretation would be adopted in preference to any of the others.

(To be continued.)

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XI.

THE CROSSWOOD BIBLE SOCIETY.

FOREMOST among the attractions there was, in Crosswood, a Bible Society which boasted of being admirably supported; and the new rector had hardly got fairly settled down in his district before he was waited upon by a select deputation of two, consisting of Mr. Jabez Wellbeloved, the baker, and Mr. Uriah Irons, the saddler, who were empowered to solicit that he would join the committee, in the place of his predecessor in the living, and render assistance to "the good old cause of free Bible distribution." He knew of the parent, the British and Foreign Society—just knew of it, and that was all, for he had not attended its meetings; thus, when waited upon by the two active members, he was utterly ignorant of the nature and general objects of the Crosswood branch. Confessing his ignorance, he expressed himself desirous of learning the true state of the case, and, without any hesitation, requested them to furnish reasons why he should act in accordance with their suggestions. They were taken aback by this candour, for having been trained to believe it to be a serious evil to appear ignorant of any special subject, it had been their practice to remain silent about the topic of discussion, until, in the course of conversation, enough had been picked up, in order to enable them to speak without seriously compromising their integrity. But having recovered their breath, they entered into the requisite explanations.

It was Wellbeloved who opened the matter of answering, and Wellbeloved was an original man. He stood six feet in height, and, as he boasted, "six feet without shoes;" he was a man of bone and skin, not of fat or muscle. His hands were large, shoulder-of-mutton hands, and his feet were in due proportion, large and formless, but rounded somewhat like those of the elephant. His face was saturnine, long, and of an unhappy aspect, reminding the beholder of the hungry traveller who had been fortunate enough to

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES, VOL. II.

F

find a bad fourpenny piece, just after discovering that he had lost his last half-crown. As a tradesman he was thriving; his "John-the-Baptist cracknels" had brought him in a considerable sum; and when first he commenced to make and vend his "St. Paul crumpets," scarcely a respectable tea-table in the town was without them. The text, as he translated it, that, "Being a believer, giveth a man success in this world as well as in the next," was always upon his lips; and nobody could doubt of his having succeeded, although more than one had doubted his integrity. As an employer, he was fond of the text, "Servants obey your masters;" for whenever he had occasion to complain of those who were in his service he quoted it, as justifying his severity. One journeyman baker, who, after excessive labour, had fallen asleep just before the time to draw a batch of "John-the-Baptist cracknels," and left them to be destroyed, was so disgusted with the scripture quotations, that he swore he would never read the book itself, "because it is the friend of despotic masters." In this he had doubly erred, but thousands have done the same, and from the same cause.

Jabez Wellbeloved cared little about what his men said, for he had the ear of all the better classes in the district, who always treated the complaints of his servants as rash calumnies. It is true that at one time he was somewhat shunned because on Sundays dinners were baked in his oven; but all that was forgotten when "he so ably demonstrated," as *The Tomahawk* said, that "through his oven being used, more persons had a good opportunity for attending church on Sundays." This profit and piety, getting on in the world, and ensuring a seat in heaven, went hand in hand, and he was satisfied. When he put an advertisement into the paper for "a stout young man who could carry two hundred weight, and walk with the fear of God before his eyes," it was highly gratifying to the religious public; who thought more of the "walking in fear of God," than they did of the two hundred weight breaking the man's back. It was as a Bible man that he transacted his business when there was any opening in his favour, but when the text proved to be against him, he was clever in giving it a new meaning—quite as much so as they are who so loudly declaim against "Sabbath breaking," while their own cooks and other servants are slaving away to prepare for the Sabbath party. Frequently his practice was very smart, but who could doubt the correctness of any course of conduct pursued by such a pattern of the "Bible Christian?" Some had imagined that his danger lay in being proud of his religious character, but there are grave reasons for doubting if they did not mistake what it was of which he was proud. Lester, however, was not in error in supposing that he was especially proud of being called upon to furnish a live reactor with information about Bible Societies.

"Sir," said he, and in his deepest chest tones, which were somewhat sepulchral, "Sir, I am but a poor vessel of the Lord's to be called upon to pour forth such information, but, in season and out of season, I am ready, and I dare not refuse to do my best in this noble cause. The fact is, that it is our intention to flood the world with copies of the Word. Through spreading far and wide the Power of God, we intend to destroy the usurped authority of Satan. It is the intention of our glorious Society to have the Scriptures translated into every language and every tongue; and we know that the Lord will aid us; yes, despite the attempts and machinations of the Wicked One, who is assisted by the evil-minded among men, the Lord will bless our attempt to get a copy of His Word into every cottage in the land." This was all uttered with a peculiar nasal twang, that tickled the risible

faculties of Lester, who restrained himself, but was in doubt whether it was a knave or a maniac with whom he was dealing. Anxious to bring the interview to a speedy conclusion, and fearful that his visitor might have a large stock of the same inconclusive talk to get through, he interrupted him, to ask if that was the sole aim of the Society. "Because," he added, "if that is its only aim, I fear it will be impossible for me to join the committee."

"Impossible!" ejaculated the astonished baker. "Surely my ears have deceived me. What else is there we can do which is so likely to help the poor? To give a man a Bible is to feed him with spiritual food, for it will lead him on the high road to heaven. In the language of the poet, I may justly say—

'Holy Bible, book divine;
Precious treasure, thou art mine;'

for it is my treasure; and it being but a Christian duty to desire others to possess the happiness I enjoy, I am labouring to get for all my fellow-sinners a copy of the Holy Word. There have been times when it has been meat and drink to me; and I was told by a City Missionary of a man who always read that blessed book to his children when they had had no dinner. It allayed the pangs of hunger, and made them forget their wants. The late rector, when he visited the sick poor, always read to them that part of Job where it shows how much he had lost and how much he had suffered, and yet would not complain. Ah, Job was a dear good man, but sadly troubled by his sons and daughters and the devil. I often think that if I were in the same position as he was, I should become impatient, and be tempted to complain of the miseries I had to endure. But he was supported in his trials, and thus could pass through the fire without being singed."

The latter remark rendered it perfectly clear that Wellbeloved did not read, and, indeed, was but poorly informed about the book he was so loudly vaunting. He had taken the character of Job upon trust, calling him a patient man, but clearly without attempting to understand what the term "patience" meant. He who curses the day on which he was born, as Job did, and in no measured phrases, may be a patient man, but in that case the meaning of the term must be the reverse of what is generally intended. Job was the opposite of patient, but Jabez did not trouble himself to discover the truth of popular ideas, all he seemed to be influenced by was the fact that they were popular. There can be no doubt if Crosswood had abounded with "unbelievers," and he could have got their custom, he, too, would have been a rigid unbeliever. Not that he was one of those who could have deliberately turned round for the sake of pecuniary profit to maintain the opposite of what he believed to be true, for somehow he managed to keep a conscience; but he was easily convinced whenever self-interest held the light and unfolded the argument. Once, when sitting upon a jury, and listening to the counsel for the prosecution, he believed the prisoner—charged with stealing a warming-pan and two flat irons—to be one of the greatest scoundrels upon the face of the earth; when counsel for the defence began to warm with his subject, Jabez began to melt, and was not long in perceiving that the man who stood at the bar was an injured innocent of the purest water. The cross-examination of the defendant's witnesses shook him again, and then, after the judge had summed up, he stated to a brother jurymen, that he could neither make up his mind to believe the warming-pan had been stolen, that there were any flat irons to steal, or that the prisoner could condescend to commit the crime of stealing. But when the remaining eleven

declared there could be no doubt about the fact, he coincided with them, and felt satisfied it must be so. Thus it was with the Bible Society; he had never read the book with any earnest desire to discover either its literary worth or its true meaning—he accepted both, and was content to repeat what others said. He never doubted the patience of Job, because, according to the common saying, it was believed by others, and hence the conclusion of his observations was that, “if the poor could be rendered as patient as Job it would be a great blessing to society at large. We should hear but little then of strikes and Chartism, and other schemes of revolt and plunder.”

Lester listened very attentively, and as gravely as possible, but was somewhat perplexed to comprehend the quality and character of the speaker. He, too, according to the traditions of his pulpit, was equally anxious that every Englishman, and, indeed, that all other men, should possess a copy of the Bible, but with an earnestness and a clearness of comprehension somewhat rare in the Churches, he was especially desirous of their being so educated as to render it possible for them to understand the meaning of what they read. Turning to Mr. Jabez Wellbeloved, he inquired,

“What do you expect will follow as the result of placing the Bible in the hand of every human being? From your statement, it appears that the Society desires every cottage to be supplied with a Bible, and I, at least, cannot say anything against it. Still, I should like to hear your opinion about the good results which are to follow.”

Jabez, as he afterwards said, felt himself to be so much taken a-back by this question, that he hardly knew how to answer. His notion was that all sorts of sin and wickedness, all kinds of vice and shame, would cease if the world were once well flooded with authorised copies of the Scriptures. The greatest measure of misery of which he was capable of conceiving was filled to the brim when the victim was Bibleless, and there was scarcely a blessing to be named which he would not have enumerated as likely to result from the universal distribution of cheap Bibles.

“What good!” said he. “Why, Sir, how else can we destroy Popery, but by freely distributing copies of the Word? The Pope hates the Bible; he would be glad to destroy every copy, but in that measure of wickedness he will not succeed. There is no power in Popery now to accomplish its hellish purposes. The Word has gone abroad, and all will soon be well. The little horns are fast growing up to push over all the other horns, and then, what will Popery be? If the people had had the Bible in France there would have been no revolution. All that war of Napoleon was because the French had no Bibles. And if we in this country have become free, and strong enough to put him down, it was not because of our strength in arms, but through our having plenty of Bibles. Should we ever be invaded by foreign enemies, there can be no doubt of the result—we should beat them, but not by our own power, it would be through the power of the Scriptures.”

Lester smiled at this string of reasons and results, because of remembering having read it all, with much more of a similar character, in a lecture upon “The Bible,” delivered in the Freemasons’ Tavern before the Church of England Young Men’s Christian Association. Jabez had evidently been diligently storing his memory with many of the absurd observations to be found in that lecture; but the young rector was not to be deluded by an array of empty words, and could not be coerced into joining any society whose influence for good was questionable. “Doubtless,” said he, “your motives are very good, but your ideas are chimerical, I cannot consent to

join your committee, for were I to do so, it would only lead to the waste of time and money which should be applied to better purposes. I respect the Bible too much to assist in making it the scorn of ignorant men, and as to its power of doing good, I do not believe in it, unless in those instances wherein the way has been properly prepared. If you had asked me to assist in opening a school, or in securing the delivery of useful lectures, I should have been glad to give a promise of support, but now I must answer, No, and simply because of being convinced that it is necessary to flood the cottages with the light of education before beginning to flood them with Bibles."

At this point Uriah Irons rushed to the rescue, and insisted that education was not required in order to enable a man to understand the Scriptures.

"Look at me, Sir," said he, "I was never educated, but still I know as much about the Bible as any Bishop can know. Nothing more is needed than for a man to read it as innocently as a baby, and he is sure to get to understand it."

"That is, he will imagine, as the Puritans and Fifth Monarchy men did, he will imagine himself to understand it, but between the fact and the fancy there is a wide gulf. There is not a chapter in it which does not need for its proper interpretation, that the reader shall be familiar with not only the manners and customs of the people among whom it was written, but also with those of the surrounding nations. The writers employed the ordinary phraseology of their times, which was half-pictorial, and none but those who enter into the spirit of the age, and comprehend the philosophy of the ancients, can do justice to the language employed. How, then, can the uneducated cottager understand it? I shall be at your service when you establish a school or take any steps towards instructing the people, but at present I must decline to join your Bible Society."

The deputation withdrew from the room and the house, but went no farther than the stile at the end of the road, before sitting down to lament over the ruinous condition of things. Uriah Jones was furious about the proposal of Lester to establish schools, which he looked upon as so many hot-beds of villainy.

"Here," said he, "am I fifty-four next birthday, and never had a day's schooling in my life. I have done well enough without it, and so did all my family, why, then, should there be such a cry about education. I believe our rector is an infidel. He and Sam Stokes will get on well enough together. They are quite agreed about the uselessness of the Word, and as far as I can see there is not a bit of difference between them."

"Yes," said Jabez, "that struck me when he was talking about something being needed by men before they are put into possession of the Bible."

Just at this juncture the two gentlemen were accosted by a man and a lad, soiled and worn by travel, looking hungry and sad, who asked them to bestow a few pence for bread. The elder looked ashamed of his position; and from the halting manner in which he made his approach, it was evident, that he had not been used to soliciting alms.

"Master," said the man, "I'm looking for work, and it's a good many hours now since we had anything to eat."

"You are rogues, both of you. A set of fellows like you running up and down the country, I have no patience with," said Uriah, "and if I had my will, I'd have the likes of you well flogged and transported. Keep out of Crosswood, or I'll get you both a month in prison as vagabonds."

A tinge of colour came into the pale face of the elder traveller, and his

sunken eye flashed with indignation. "I'm no rogue or vagabond," said he, "but an honest man in search of work, in what men call a Christian country. And poor as I am now, I've seen the day when I would have knocked the man down that called me a rogue; but I'm too weak now. Come on, Bill," said he to his younger companion, "come on, there's some cottages yonder, and I dare say they'll give us a few kind words, if they can't give us a bit of bread."

They hobbled away in a manner that showed them to be foot-sore, but that fact produced no change in their favour in the minds of the gentlemen of the deputation, who still sat discussing the character of the rector, and questioning if he were not a downright infidel. Uriah suggested that it was their duty carefully to notice what he said in his sermons. "The cloven hoof," he continued, "will be sure to peep out, and then we had better apply to the bishop. For why should a man who hates the Bible be allowed to stand up before Christian men as a teacher? I am tired of parsons who are wiser than their congregations, and who seem to think we have no right to an opinion of our own."

Jabez considered that nothing could be better than that plan, and thus these "Bible Christians," as they termed themselves, prepared to discover the absence of orthodoxy in the discourses of their pastor. They were to obtain compensation for their repulse; and it must be confessed they became regular attendants at the parish church. Their plan seems to have been, to make up for their want of true religion, by attaching the stigma of unbelief to the rector; and if at times, when they met to compare notes, they were a little annoyed at not having succeeded, we cannot speak of them as being in any sense peculiar, for the modern method adopted by many men is to compensate for the absence of religion in themselves by proving the unorthodox character of their neighbour. There are thousands who never do a noble deed, who never labour at a noble work, and who are mainly engaged in such pursuits as need that the claims of religion should be ignored. They pay no heed to them until the hours of rest arrive, and then, with Argus eyes, they watch their neighbours, to catch them falling, or strain their language until it is made to mean quite the contrary of what the utterers intended. They, too, shall have their reward; for although it be in their power to inflict pain upon such men as Lester, the hour must come when the truth shall be made clear, and justice will be done.

NO PEOPLE can be great, unless they feel and act greatly. For meanness of soul is destruction, opposed to all moral and spiritual elevation. To obey inferior impulses only, however disguised and decorated, is to sacrifice the bloom of the soul. To obey the intellect, merely, is but a degree higher. There are sects, indeed, as there are individuals, in which a trace of gentle culture is hardly to be found. Yet, to secure the loftiest results, the highest aims, sects must be united on the broad platform of intelligence and faith, noblest action conjoined with truest love.

THE LOFTIER VIRTUES, spirituality, gentleness, unselfishness, by a law of the inner, the higher life, appertain to men and women, to our common humanity, alike. For God has made no distinction between the highest and holiest manhood, the highest and holiest womanhood. The inward light, the masculine independence, necessary to the formation of character, are evinced alike, regardless of sex, by the best and wisest of our kind.

LIFE AND TEACHING OF ZOROASTER.

§ 4.—ZOROASTER SEARCHING FOR KNOWLEDGE.

To Zoroaster, at this period, the all-important question was, how should he enter into the full possession of truth in relation to God and Man, Death and Immortality? Could any living being teach him? Alas, none; and thus he, too, had to share the common lot of truth-seekers, in being compelled to suffer and toil, and win his convictions from out of the grim worlds of ignorance and darkness, at great cost of agonising pain and unremitting perseverance. While this was working he retired to the mountains, as all great ones have retired, to mountains or deserts, in order, when thus far removed from the influence of human interests and passions, to work out the great problems, and find for that of life itself a reasonable solution. He had not retired for aye; had not snapped in twain the great and solemn bonds of life; but only for a time did he shut out the world, in order the better to work out the necessary solutions. For life is sacred, and death a verity; and both mysteries. What he thought, and hoped, and suffered, in his retirement we know not, for the history of all that is wrapped in a veil of allegory, of which no fitting key remains. The whole is embodied in his writings, but who can wisely read them? The believers say that his celebrated journey to the distant mountains, and his prolonged residence there, was, in truth, not a mere journey, as understood in modern days, but was a real journey to heaven, and residence there. They tell that he saw God, face to face, conversed with, and received directions from, Him; and the Parsees of India, still pure in the Zoroastrian faith, have no doubt of this instance of his being lifted up into the seventh heaven.

They relate that when he had sought after Ormuzd the Eternal One, Bahman, the chief of angels, appeared unto him, and inquired what he desired—for what was he so anxious? The man of thought and pain answered, "I have no desire but that of pleasing God; my heart seeks after 'nothing but righteousness, and my belief is, that thou wilt guide me to 'what is good.'" Bahman answered, "Arise! that thou mayest appear 'before God; entreat from His Majesty what thou desirest from His bounty; 'He will return thee a profitable answer.'" Then the sage closed his eyes for an instant, but on opening them, behold all was changed; and now he is surrounded by beings of light, virgins, and angels, all of whom are warm in their greeting and loud in his praise, until the moment came when he was to appear in the presence of Ormuzd, the Great Creator. Of course there are various ways in which the Zoroastrians explain this: as the Hebrews explain the opening passage of Job, and the Evil One going up with the sons of God, or the visit of God to Abraham, when he ate the calf and cakes; some saying that it should be understood literally, others that it was only a vision. But whether we accept or reject these, or say that it was merely symbolic of thoughts which arose within him, it will still come to the same end here, for the whole results must be traced ere we can decide the question fairly.

And here we must pause, to turn, for a brief space, to the idea of God as it was conceived in the mind of Zoroaster. In one of his oracles we are told, that "God is He that has the head of a hawk. He is the first, indestructible, 'eternal, unbegotten, indivisible, dissimilar; the dispenser of all good; incorruptible; the best of the good, the wisest of the wise. He is the father of 'equity and justice; self-taught, physical, perfect, and wise, and the only 'inventor of the sacred philosophy. The most ancient of all things is God,

"for He is uncreated; from Him all has proceeded, and without Him nothing can continue to exist." In other passages He is called, "Time without bounds"—"Time without beginning or end; the author of all the active principles of the Universe." Gibbon says: "It must be confessed, that this infinite substance seems rather a metaphysical abstraction of the mind than a real object endowed with self-consciousness, possessed of moral perceptions;" and others, who have approached the discussion in a different spirit to that of Gibbon, have urged it as a reproach upon Zoroastrianism, that it does not define its God with greater distinctness. But if fair in any case, is it not so in all others? What religious body, with any degree of self-respect, or with any rational hope of success, will undertake to define God more distinctly than Zoroaster did? "Time without bounds"—well, is not that the same as our Eternal, Everlasting, and Ever-living God? The fact is, that the finite cannot adequately express, or even conceive, the infinite. Thoughts arise within our souls which are vastly too big for words, too sacred for daily speech, and too deep for any possible form of utterance. We may struggle for words till life has fled, and without success, for as yet the fitting ones have not been coined. This Zoroaster had within his soul a perception of the grand undertones and unity of nature: he had realised, that the ever-flowing sea of life and motion must proceed from one—not as his ancestors had believed, from many sources; that beneath the surface of things there was some centre round which they all revolved, and from out of which they drew their life and laws of being—and whatever name he chose, could only serve as an apology for not finding a better and fitter. And, indeed, in all cases the word is dead, the name is valueless, for not the name or word, but the associated ideas it is which give greatness or littleness unto it. Men may talk to a child, or to some half-humanised Bosjesman, about God, and obtaining their assent to the word they utter, they may flatter themselves that the pupils have grasped the idea; but, in truth, it is not so, for when they come to compare notes they soon find that the mere name, not the idea, is what has been received.

But out of the "Time without bounds" proceeded the two principles of good and evil, Ormuzd and Ahriman, the former created all the good and the latter all the bad. Ormuzd is the Word, the holy Hunover, and Ahriman is the Satan and Spirit of evil. The Persians called him "the old serpent," the "prince of serpents," "father of lies," and sole source of every evil, yet, of course, acknowledged that he too had come from "Time without Bounds." They reasoned that all came from God, consequently, then, evil also. But if God be good, how could He create a great source of evil? How did He who knows all things, who is the source of all bounty and blessing, permit that evil should grow within His fair domains? That to the Persian was the great problem which might be explained, but could not be denied. Looking out into the world, they saw the storms and whirlwinds, the savage beasts, and sometimes still more savage men, and how came these? Darkness, Pain, and Death, how came these? They had not gone so far as to inquire if it were true that these were actual evils, for they were certain no such question was necessary; and long ages had to pass ere the truth could be proclaimed. Even now it is only sparsely recognised, but it will go onward to victory. Then the poor Persian had only light enough to see that evil was a power; and so the mighty men of magic were called into existence to hold this evil power in check. They shall do their incantations, and manage to keep the evil powers somewhat under, so that some produce may be realised from the

land, and men do not perish miserably. That was the work of the elder Magi. They were not so much to procure blessings directly, as to cheat or persuade Ahriman into partial suspension of his designs, that thus poor wretches might live. But what of man, of magical power? What of the good spirit? Why did He permit the evil to come into existence? See! He could not help it, for there is a duality in nature. The good and the evil, the light and darkness; and so evil is a necessity for a time, and these two will battle till the evil is swallowed up, and only the good will remain. Thus he accounted for evil; and, however we may feel inclined to reject his theory, we will say, it is better accounted for in that way than by the modern method of saying it is sinful to inquire into such matters—asking men only to believe, pay their tithes, and be satisfied. In that Persian mode habits of thinking were generated; by modern methods, thinking is blotted out, and stupid assent becomes the order of the day.

Thus was bodied forth the creation of good and evil spirits. Ere man was, or the sun, or moon, or stars, God sat upon His vast and solitary throne, and sent forth from Himself this good creating spirit, the word Ormuzd, but not, as the Persians say, Ahriman also. For while they acknowledge that both proceeded from His act, with this difference, however, that He directly willed the existence of the Word, not that of the Evil One, who “came as a necessary consequence, as shade follows light, as night follows day.” But now that these two existed—now that each had his battalions, it was necessary they should fight. Ormuzd had resolved that evil should be fully blotted out, and the news reached Ahriman in his hell of torture and fires. The Evil One trembled, for although he had resolved to battle for dominion, he seems to have fairly appreciated the weakness of his position. He had created Deves and the Darujs, but could he hope that in a contest they would bear themselves valourously. Gloom sat upon his brow as he reclined upon his throne of molten brass, amidst darkness so thick that it could be felt, when his creature Deves came to petition that he would not surrender, nor give way without a struggle, but rely upon them, and they would bear themselves bravely in the fight. Ahriman resolved—Yes, be it so; I’ll fight, and for no mean prize; but for this, to be a subject or to be a king. Ormuzd had now created the earth, and arranged all in order for the future growth of man. He had appointed angels (Amshaspunds) to protect the flocks and herds, fruits and metals, with all else fair and good, and had also created the happy spirits which fill up space. Ahriman arose to counteract this influence, but Mythra, who is styled the Mediator between God and His creatures, interfered, and brought about a kind of truce, which lasted through about one thousand years. Then Ormuzd resolved that he would call man into existence, when Ahriman, followed by his Deves, rushed upon the earth, and filled all with confusion. Where there had been peace, now was disorder; all order and unity was at an end, for hell had broken loose, with the resolve to conquer in the fray. We shall not drag our readers through the contest. It is evident that in only one way could it be decided. But Ahriman penetrated into very heaven itself, and was joined by many weak-souled angels, who feared the result would be against heaven. They were for the strongest party, not out of love to it, but of love unto themselves, for it was their position they wished to preserve. The holy Hunover was, however, triumphant, and Ahriman was borne back to his native hell; the faithful ones received their reward in being still standing in the Light of God, while all the others were left to wait their folly or crime in outer darkness.

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXX.

MARTYRDOM FOR THE TRUTH.

FROM November, 1414, to the following month of June, Huss had lain in prison at Constance. And now, on the 6th June, 1415, he is brought forth from prison, hollow-eyed and emaciated, but firm and undismayed. It is easy to see that, physically, he has suffered much, but that his mind and will are yet unconquered. Brought forth, then, he now is,—for what? To be heard before the Council, as the Emperor promised? Nay, nay, to be put upon his trial as a heretic and a rebel against the authority of the Church. Brought before the Council in chains, his works are produced; he is asked if they are his, and acknowledges the fact. The articles of accusation are then ordered to be read; but while they are in process of reading, indignant murmurs on the one hand, replied to by shouts of insolent mockery on the other, create so great an uproar that the proceedings are suspended. So soon as quiet is in some measure restored, Huss declares, calmly, that he is prepared, out of Scripture and by the writings of the Fathers, to show the correctness of his opinions. This declaration, however, is but the signal for another outburst of mockery, in which the prelates and other great dignitaries are not ashamed to join: and in the midst of this, Huss, manacled and chained, is ordered away to prison again. The next day he is brought up again; and after a long examination, in which, wronged as he was by these proceedings, he showed equal tact and temper, while insolence and vulgar injustice marked the conduct of his judges, he is again remanded to his dungeon. Once again, the following day, he is brought up, and the same process is repeated. The Council had hoped to intimidate him into recanting. ‘Unqualified submission is required,’ said Cardinal Cambray, ‘and if you persist in defying us, we know how to proceed.’ But Huss will be loyal to the Truth; he wavers not. They may kill, but they cannot conquer him.

The traitor, or craven (which the reader will), the Emperor Sigismund, sat on his throne. “You have heard,” said he, “the charges against Huss. In my judgment each of these crimes is deserving of death. If he does not forswear all his errors he must be burned. If he submits, he must be stripped of his preacher’s office, and banished from Bohemia: there he would only disseminate more dangerous errors. The evil must be extirpated, root and branch. If any of his partizans are in Constance, they must be proceeded against with the utmost severity, especially his disciple, Jerome of Prague.” Huss turned to his good friend, the Knight of Chlum, and said, mournfully, “I was warned not to trust to his safe conduct; I have been under a sad delusion; he has condemned me even before mine enemies.” As for Jerome of Prague, the Emperor knew that he was in Constance, whither his restless spirit had led him, that he might see and hear all that befell his master, with the forlorn but cherished hope, too, that he might be useful to him. The words of Sigismund sealed the fate of Huss. The refusal to retract aught of what he had written, unless shown in what it was false, uttered by him in the first instance, was now repeated as calmly and collectedly as if his life had not been at stake.

There is, indeed, something sublime in the conduct and bearing of this man throughout the whole of these three days of protracted torture, insult, abuse, and mockery. He was no fanatic, strung up to assert or do a thing under momentary excitement, which, when the excitement had subsided, he

would be as ready to deny or retract. No! he was a man who had earnestly sought for the Truth, and believed he had found it, and far too noble to lie in the sight of God by abandoning his truth, though all the world might bid him do so. We, looking at many of the beliefs of Huss, may not think them true—but they were truths to him. In judging of those men who, like him, have been willing to suffer for opinion's sake, we should ever bear in mind that Truth is subjective; and that honesty which leads a man to stand by what he believes to be Truth, is equally virtuous, whether his belief be sound or unsound. In addition to that, we must remember that Huss defended a principle which is eternally true—that, namely, of the right of every man to think for himself, and express his thoughts untrammelled and unhindered by authority of Church or Emperor. “If Eleazar, under the Old Law,” was his sublime reply to those who would have had him recant, “refused to eat forbidden food, lest he should sin against God, and leave a bad example to posterity, how can I, a Priest of the New Law, however unworthy, from fear of death, sin so heinously against God, first, by departure from truth; secondly, by perjury; thirdly, by grievous scandal to my brethren?” By such men as this it is that all our rights—blood-baptized as they are—have been wrested from the hands of tyrants.

All attempts to make Huss recant having failed, the Council now determined to sentence him. It is the 6th July when Huss is brought up before the Council in full session for this purpose. The session is held in the Cathedral, and commences with the celebration of High Mass, during which Huss, as an abandoned heretic, is kept standing in the porch. A sermon is next preached by the Bishop of Lodi, from the text—“That the body of Sin might be destroyed.” Fierce declamation against Huss; servile adulation of the Emperor Sigismund—“whose glorious office,” said the bishop, “it is to destroy heresy and schism, especially this obstinate heretic” (pointing to Huss);—and only such blasphemy as Priests are capable of, characterised the whole of this discourse. And now the Council proceeds to the business of the meeting. First, Huss's writings are condemned to be burnt. “Wherefore condemn ye them,” said Huss, “when you have not offered a single argument to prove that they are at variance with the Holy Scriptures and with the articles of faith? and what injustice this is, that ye condemn the whole of my writings, many of which ye have never seen, much less read!” Next, the sentence is read, condemning Huss himself to the flames, but first to be degraded from his priestly office. Huss was on his knees to receive the sentence, and before he rose he prayed: “Oh! God, forgive these my enemies, as thou knowest that they have falsely accused me before men; forgive them, oh! God, for the sake of thy great mercy!” These words were received by the “holy bishops and priests” assembled with jeers and scornful laughter.

Five bishops and one archbishop were appointed to perform the office of degradation. Clad in full priestly attire Huss is led to the high altar. One by one the robes are now stripped from him, a dire curse being pronounced on each as it is cast aside. Huss submitted with calm dignity to the blasphemous mockery. Now the tonsure is to be cut off; but a dispute arises among the executioner-bishops. “Should this be done with scissors or a razor?” a most important question—at such a time, too! “Lo!” said Huss, in bitter sadness, “they cannot agree how to put me to shame!” It was ultimately done with scissors. A high paper cap, painted over with devils, was now placed upon his head, with the inscription, “Arch-heretic!

"Now we devote thy soul to the Devils in hell!" and so the service ended. The Emperor now ordered him to be executed. "Freely came I here, with 'your safe-conduct!'" said Huss, looking steadily at the throned traitor, who started and trembled, while a deep blush passed over his face.

Now, from the Cathedral of Constance the melancholy yet glorious procession starts. Huss, with the headsman, two of his servants going before, two behind, are followed by eight hundred horse. As they pass the bishop's palace, the procession is ordered to halt, that Huss may gaze upon his books burning. He smiles a bitter smile, less bitter it might have been could he have known that all the burning could not destroy. As he passes along he addresses the people in German, informing them that those who have condemned him have not shown him to be in error. At last the place of execution is reached, Behold! there the pile which is to become the martyr's funeral pyre. The people close around; Huss kneels and prays: "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." "We know not what this man 'may have done,'" is the remark of many, "but his prayers to God are excellent." While he was praying, the paper cap fell from his head; the soldiers were ordered to replace it: "Let him be burnt with all his devils!" is the remark of the officiating functionaries. He was desirous to confess before leaving the world. A richly attired priest, seated on a stately horse, exclaimed, "No confessor shall be granted to a heretic!"

But the secular authorities were more lenient. A confessor arrives; but he requires Huss to retract his errors. "I have nothing to retract," said he. "Then I cannot receive your confession." "Be it so," replied Huss, "it matters not, I will confess my sins to God." And so unannealed and unconsolated, except by the witness of his own clear conscience, Huss was now to be launched into eternity. We, looking at the matter in a different light, may think this a small matter; we should, however, recollect that it was not so to Huss, who believed in the duty and value of confession. But what shall we say of these priestly butchers, who, if they believed the doctrines of their own Church, were doing their best to kill this man's soul as well as his body? The fire is now kindled, and Huss, tied by an old rusty chain to the stake, commences to sing in a loud voice; ere long the smoke and flame, driven by the winds into his face, put a stop to his singing; and a few moments after, the ashes of Huss are mingled with the embers of his funeral pile. The ashes were carefully collected and cast into the Rhine, in order that nothing might remain of him to pollute the soil on which the sacred city of Constance stood. And so, as Neander remarks, the *Christian* Council of Constance disposed of the ashes of Huss precisely as the ashes of Polycarp were disposed of by the Pagans. So ended the martyrdom of brave John Huss.

John Huss, in common with all the noble army of martyrs for the Truth, stands to us as an example. He dared to die for the Truth; we too frequently hesitate to be at any inconvenience for its sake. He manfully withstood the assembled power of the Church at Constance; we tamely let the Churches stand in the way of all kinds of Reform. He was one, we are many; the greater his honour and our disgrace. Brothers, it is not merely disgrace, but worse, far worse; for thereby we give the Priest the power he has—we lend a hand in procuring our own moral death, and we promote the spiritual disease which leads to so many sad results in the world around us. Many would be willing to be Religious Reformers if the task were an easy one; but not being easy, they shirk their duty, and play the hypocrite in life. John Huss

had no easy work to do at Constance, but he did it; he asked not for ease, but how he could best aid the cause of God and Truth. Who would not rather be John Huss, with all John Huss had to suffer, than live a life of hypocrisy and self-contempt? Is life worth purchasing by the loss of one's soul? These would be questions worth asking and answering, even if life were the sacrifice required; but in these days no such heavy sacrifice is required; our task is light compared with that which Huss and others shrank not from performing. Let the lives of such as Huss inspire us to work, asking not for ease, but manfully striving to do what there is to be done, easy or hard as the task may be. Let us, too, shrink not from our duty because men revile and persecute, but be ever true to ourselves and to humanity—loyal to Truth and to God.

JAS. L. GOODING.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

(Continued from p. 64.)

GOING again over the list of alternatives, that of "Arabs," instead of "ravens," is probably the one that persons free from any previous bias would select as the most probable. Dr. Kitto declares that, although he would not hesitate at the ravens, if quite sure that those birds were really intended, yet when the alternative was thus open, he rather inclined to the Arabs,—influenced, he says, by such a knowledge of the habits and character of that people as enabled him to perceive their entire fitness to be the agents of "this providential dispensation in favour of Elijah." Nothing seems more likely than that encampments of Arabs, who still intrude their tents, at certain times of the year, upon the borders, or into the unappropriated pastures of settled countries—would at this season of drought have been forced within reach of the brook Cherith; and, knowing the increasing scarcity of water, would have remained there as long as its stream afforded any to them—that is, as long as Elijah himself remained, which was until the stream was dried up. They were also, from their condition and habits of life, the very persons to whom the secret of his retreat might be most safely entrusted,—far more so than it would have been to any towns-people, subjects of Ahab, whom some conceive to have been the parties in question. They were the least likely to know his person, or that he was sought after by the king; or, if they did know this, they were less than any other persons open to any inducements to betray him which the king could offer, or any fears he could awaken. Besides, when he had once eaten of their bread and meat, the great law of Arabian honour made him secure of continued support, and safe from betrayal. Nothing they could afterwards learn concerning him—no temptation that might afterwards be presented—could have any force against the solemn obligation which was thus incurred, and the breach of which would cover the tribe with scorn and shame for many generations. With these views, it seems, says Dr. Kitto, that "I have commanded the *Arabs* to feed thee there," is, under all the circumstances, a more probable and natural interpretation than "I have commanded the *ravens* to feed thee there."*

But the brook Cherith at length dried up, and then Elijah received a fresh command. "And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there

* Kitto: Daily Scripture Readings, vol. iv, pp. 219-222.

"gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah."

This, to say the least, is a most extraordinary command, and unexpectedly, yet not less truly, serves to bring out very distinctly the immense difference between the Jews and Pagans, a difference which in these latter days we perceive is considerably to the advantage of the Pagans. Elijah was to go into the land of Jezebel, into the country of Baal worship. He was to go to one of these much-denounced Pagan women, and ask food from her, although at that time bearing all the marks of a prophet of Jehovah. Does not this fact very plainly reveal the larger toleration, the nobler and freer spirit of the Pagan? The priest or prophet of Jehovah could travel with great safety from one end of Asia to the other, and no one would crucify or even undertake to rebuke him for his faith. Each Pagan nation generously tolerated the Gods of the other nations; for the people believed that each had their own particular Deities, and hence paid them a degree of respect which in some instances amounted almost to worship. But the Hebrew descendant of Abraham, bred in a narrower school, could not permit any such toleration. The Hebrew priest, and the Hebrew prophet, without attempting to render justice to the simple worshipper, were alike insulting when any other God was named, and this, not so much out of love to their own Jehovah, as from an intense egotism. For who can say they loved and obeyed their own God? They laboured, as in a phase of mental disease, under the morbid idea that God loved only themselves, and that all other people were as so much dross in the eyes of the Eternal, themselves being the favourites of heaven. And for this egotism and exclusiveness even in modern pulpits they are highly praised; because, say the preachers, there can only be one true God. Granted, that as far as our reasoning will safely carry us this is clearly so, but does it follow that the Jews had rightly conceived of that One? They had seized upon the abstract truth on the metaphysical side, but had strangely missed it upon the moral side. They knew, or imagined themselves to know of God as One, having no compeer or partner, but they did not know or conceive Him as universally operating, and alike good unto all. This latter truth was realised by the Pagan nations. They said that the Divinities attended to the interests of all peoples. To them there was no people without their protecting God. And surely, after all, this was rendering deeper homage to the Eternal than could be rendered by the men who had only grasped the metaphysical truth. Then, too, the Pagan nations, although believing that the God of one people was stronger than the God of another, believed also that their nature was essentially the same, hence, while bowing to one form of the Divine Idea, they paid due respect unto all, and if not persecuted they would not persecute. It follows, then, that Elijah, by going into the Sidonian country, incurred not the least danger, and when we read of how he was received by the widow woman, we must acknowledge that the story is true to the spirit of the age, although probably, as plain history, we may reject it altogether. In that time a Pagan woman would thus act, but whether the case given is real or not is wholly another matter.

It is narrated that Elijah remained with this woman, and that meal and oil were not known to fail during his sojourn there. It was "miraculously" preserved. But, behold, her child, her much-loved child, died—her son, her only son;

and it is impossible to overlook how touchingly the story is narrated. "And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him down upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."*

Such is the narrative, and one is sorry to touch it with the cold hand of criticism, for is it not beautiful as a whole, making us desire to believe it entirely true? The critics have suggested that the child was only in the trance state, only in a lethargic condition, consequent upon the struggles of convulsions, and many of them have collected wonderful histories of the resuscitation of persons who were supposed to be dead, to which we might add the remarkable case which occurred the other day of the medical man, who, after two hours labour, succeeded in restoring animation to a boy, who was supposed to be dead through drowning; numerous similar instances have occurred. Some join with Ennemoser, who, in his history of magic,† suggests that Elijah subjected the boy to "magnetic treatment," which he contends, and with great reason, was well known to the ancients. Such treatment has been resorted to with great success in modern times, and when we read of the marvels wrought by the magicians of the middle ages in "restoring the dead to life," we account for the fact by assuming that magnetism was one of the secrets of the Rosicrucian and other societies which then existed. There are critics, however, who anatomise the story in a merciless manner, and prove that the incongruities render it impossible for any rational man to accord it his sanction, and when their essays have been candidly perused it must be confessed that their arguments seriously shake the whole narrative, and reduce it to the form of an unfounded fiction.

And yet, what man amongst us, especially if he be a father, that would not be heartily glad to know it were true?—as he would be glad could the same thing be daily done when agony is rending the motherly heart. See that mother sitting there, looking with unspeakable agony upon her only son, as throe after throe of pain, as fit after fit convulses his tender frame, and portentously threatens the coming dissolution. And now, after all her care and tender watching, he is dead, lies dead in her lap; still is he again, and with all a mother's fondness, pressed to her heart as though he were yet alive. Is it possible for her to realise the fact that he is *dead*? Her only son *dead*? The single brand that had been left, with which she had so earnestly hoped to rekindle a cheerful flame to warm and gladden, and people the home of his dead sire, is quenched in darkness;—all her cherished hopes have faded into thin air, and those bright visionary days lying far down in the future, that high and manly career, which, as a mother, she had painted for her boy—all the sunny pictures of his after life, which night after night she had conjured up to cheer her when watching him in his sleep—all, all were gone into the land of dim dreams, leaving her only the stern heartbreaking reality that her boy was dead, and that it was a corpse, not a living son, that she pressed to her breast. And yet she cannot believe it is so. Only as a terrible fear does she admit the thought. She does not say, Why hast thou slain my son? But, as only admitting the possibility that he could die, she asks, "Art thou come unto me to bring my sin into remembrance, and to slay my son?" Still his death is thought of as

* 1 Kings, xvii. 17-24.

† Bohn's ed. vol. i. p. 292.

something in the future, while with convulsive energy she presses the corpse to her heart. Of all the saddening, heart-moving scenes in life, I know of none that equals in its intensity of sorrow, that in which a generous mother sits in dumb agony holding her dead child. Once have I been a partaker in this, once have I had to breathe comfort when my own heart was nigh to break, and as it is only through the drops of sorrow we can see clearly into the agony of others, I can see how earnestly a man would desire to roll back the flood-tide of agony from that poor widowed heart. To give back the breathing boy, to rouse the cold clay into the glow of life again, was what every generous soul would desire. And we will hope that it was done—and done as it only could have been done, by natural means. God works by general, and not partial laws. And we cannot say that He would set aside those ordinances when there was no object to be gained. For what aim was there? What resulted, or could result, from the miracle? There was no nation to be taught. Elijah believed in God before, and the woman had her ideas that the Hebrew God was powerful as well before as after. So that when we ask the aim—beyond the comfort of the person immediately concerned—we have no answer, and hence cannot plead a suspension of the natural laws as a means to some great end. We may look at the misery, and hope it was removed, but beyond this there is nothing to be said.

But now the time has arrived for Elijah to quit his retreat and return back into Israel. It is now three years and a half since he stood before Ahab, and there has been a famine ever since. The rain had not fallen, neither had the dew descended, so that the land mourned, and its inhabitants were perishing. All the inhabitants had to suffer for the sins of Ahab and Jezebel, and not only the people but the cattle also. Everywhere the streams were dried up, and the poor beasts perished through lack of water. The guilty and the innocent were alike agonised, and we, who in this age of light read the story, can hardly refrain from bitter reproaches upon the men who tell that it was by God's special action the misery was caused. "Ah! but the people had turned from God, and had offered sacrifice to Baal." Be it so, and what of it? Are the great mass of men really responsible for their belief? Look abroad through the world, and say if it be true that even if the great mass of men were actually placed in such a position they could have been converted by such means. Are men made to love God exactly in proportion to the pains they are made to endure, and the agonies through which they pass? There was a time in England, when even the best instructed believed that every pain and every pang, all the numerous ills which flesh is heir to, should be regarded in the light of "judgments" inflicted on men for their sins, by an angry and avenging Deity. To them, perhaps, these old stories of famine and misery, brought by God upon a whole nation for some fancied sins, might appear feasible and believable; but we, taught by science to judge more truly of the ways of God to man,—capable, by a better knowledge of the laws of His Universe, of a clearer insight into the mode and character of His Moral Government,—we (unless blinded by priestly teachings and sectarian prejudices) cannot pin our faith to such tales, which outrage alike our reason and our moral sense. Leaving apart, therefore, all considerations of the historical validity of this famine-story, let it suffice for us to know that, as told, it cannot be true.

(To be continued.)

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CROSSWOOD FOREIGN POLICY.

ALTHOUGH not acknowledged by themselves it was quite evident to intelligent strangers that the people of Crosswood were greatly behind the age. They were supplied with bad gas, they hated railways, and still entertained the notion that, in the end, Richard Cobden would prove to be the ruin of trade. It had been proposed by a few of the younger spirits to obtain a branch railway from the neighbouring town of Snooksborough, but the opposition raised by the elder inhabitants was so determined that the scheme was abandoned in despair. There was an equally strong feeling against the drainage reform—"the health of towns movement," and when it was proposed that a drainage rate should be made, the whole of the inhabitants were up in arms against it, exhibiting quite as much energy and determination to prevent its being accepted as if the plan involved a serious attack upon their time-honoured liberties, or even their lives. The grand argument employed by all who spoke against the rate was its uselessness, for it was described as a perfect waste of good money. And when the advocates of clear water, with pure air, spoke of the numerous advantages in relation to the health and moral purity of the individual man which would result from adopting the system, they were answered, or supposed to be answered, by the statement that, as we are all in the hands of God, He will send diseases just the same whether the city be pure or impure—that as we cannot by flying avoid the pestilence, neither will drainage reduce the number of the sick and dying.

The next subject upon which there was a strong feeling was in relation to "Young Boney," as the inhabitants called the Emperor of France. The people were evidently labouring under the impression, that, and before long, that well-abused individual would be upon his march toward London, and although, because of Crosswood being so far from any of the high main

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES. VOL. II.

G

roads he would take, they had no fear of its being sacked, there was a strong impression that, either unto him, or through him to our own government, they would be called upon to pay some heavy war taxes. This theme of horror was upon every tongue, and naturally enough it was frequently brought on for discussion in the various public rooms and bar-parlours wherein merchants and tradesmen congregated; especially was it debated in the celebrated parlour of the Flying Dutchman.

This well-known house was the evening haunt of the smaller tradesmen and their friends; it was the head-quarters of that trifling measure of Liberalism which flourished in Crosswood; and, as the landlord was an old soldier, he was consulted as an oracle upon all questions of foreign policy. There was an air of comfort about his roomy parlour, which was well decorated, and capable of seating above two hundred persons; for, having visited some of the public rooms in London, he had learnt the mighty power of comfort and of ornament as attractions to convivial gatherings. Moreover, he invariably managed to have something going on in his house; either a concert, or a debate, or something of that sort, which was sure to occupy the attention of his visitors. The majority who entered did so, not because of desiring to drink, but because of longing for something new, for some excitement, as a means to cheer and rouse them, as well as being aids to passing away the time. On the evening when the reader is about to be introduced to the company there was no settled discussion, but a sort of running controversy, in which the chairman was called upon to introduce some topic for conversation, and was at liberty to change it at his pleasure. On this occasion Sergeant Longrange had introduced the question of "the coming French invasion," winding up his speech with the observation, that it was open for any gentleman in the room, whether favourable or the contrary, to express his opinion upon the subject.

Jones, the latter, a very important person, rose to suggest that, "with all due deference to the Chair," the topic then selected was one upon which there could be no difference of opinion, and, consequently, it could not be discussed, not even talked about.

"I confess," he continued, "that to us Englishmen—and, thank God, we all are Englishmen, there being no Irish or Scotch among us—to us Englishmen—true-born Britons—and everybody knows what a true-born Briton is; to us Britons, as I said, it is an important question—quite as much so as it is to the French—when the perjured traitor (for he is a perjured traitor, and can't deny it; the noble editor of the *Tomahawk* last week challenged him to prove that he is not a traitor, and he has not been able to do it)—when he intends coming to desolate our peaceful chalky cliffs. I was at Dover once, and when I remember the beauty of the tall mountains of chalk that for so many ages have driven the sea back, and think that the Special Constable is coming, with his infernal cannon, to fire upon those angel-like and beautiful cliffs, my blood boils within me, and I say to myself that we had better have a tax upon soap—for soap used to be taxed, and very dear it was then—yet better have a tax upon soap than that he should be allowed to do us any serious damage. But, as I was saying, there cannot be any difference of opinion upon the point that he intends to come."

"Ah! but there is," loudly whispered a stranger who sat at the farther end of the room.

Jones was astonished—not at the interruption, for such a thing was common enough, but at the fact of there being any human being so fearfully

benighted as to believe that Louis Napoleon did not intend marching upon London, to sack the Bank and destroy Downing Street.

"If the gentleman doubts that," he continued, and in a louder tone, "then, perhaps, he will doubt if I am the Crosswood hatter, he will doubt if we are now in the parlour of the Flying Dutchman, or perhaps he will deny that the moon is not made of green cheese? The fact is, that, as I said before, the subject is like a hat, it has not two sides."

"Inside and outside," was immediately whispered so loudly by the stranger that all could hear, and a loud laugh responded to the observation.

"Yes, gentlemen," said the discomfited hatter, "you may laugh, for there is no answering a silly remark of that kind; but as I wished before to say, let the gentleman rise up and show us that the traitor Napoleon will not come. I shall be glad to hear it proved, for, as I said the other day to our member, the great Sir George Losel, when he was trying on a new hat, there will be no need of such heavy taxes when we have got rid of the wretched usurper and destroyer of France."

This proposal for the stranger to speak was received with evident satisfaction, and when orders had been given to the waiter, and the chairman had rapped thrice, and called for "Order to hear the strange gentleman, who will undertake to defend the Paris assassin," such a profound stillness reigned in the room as had never before been felt during any public meeting. But he spoke not, neither did he appear to notice the general anxiety to hear him speak. At length, after a very prolonged silence, Milder, the chatty, prim, and fussy little barber, a regular attendant in the long parlour, who generally sat smoking a pipe as long as his arm, and who spoke vaguely upon all questions, yet as with the authority of a judge, said:—

"I am quite sure, whatever the gentleman may think, that Louis Napoleon will invade England, as soon as he can do so with safety and in confidence of being successful."

"Hear, hear; that at least is a safe opinion," cried the stranger, who evidently was not "the spy" that some of those present had suspected.

This "hear, hear," astonished the assembled company, but when the broken order had been restored, Johnson, a master mason, who was well known as entertaining very democratic notions, suggested that "perhaps after all the gentleman was in the right."

"The fact is," said he, "that we had better take care of our own money, and curb those gentlemen who vote supplies. Here we are spending millions every year to fatten the aristocracy, and what comes of it more than the cry for more money? The more millions we spend, the more is wanted: I can remember when we were a-spending a great deal less than we are doing now, and yet we were quite as safe, and every bit as much respected. And I more than doubt if all this talk about young Boney is anything else than a blind to get more money out of our pockets. It's easy enough to say he is coming, but it 'aint so easy for him to come. And, for my part, I believe we had better look at home to see what can be done about lowering the taxes."

"But," shouted Mat Mailler, the pork butcher, "what's the use of running on in that way about home, when the chances are that very soon we shall have no home to call our own? It was only last week that I read an account in the *Weekly Pastehorn* of how he had cheated the Frenchmen, and how he had got all his ships in readiness, so that they should sail at once with the soldiers. There could be no mistake about it, for the ships had been counted. I don't like heavy taxes any more than others do, but I'm

not a-going to sell the old country to a villainous usurper for a mess of pottage, not I."

"Ah," interposed the Chairman, "that was a fine letter in the *Pastehorn*, the writer of that epistle knows a thing or two; and didn't he just give a lashing to the Emperor? I shouldn't wonder if he was to enter an action for libel against the editor, for a few more touches like that and away goes Boney. No man can stand long against such writing."

A merry laugh came from the stranger, who was evidently much tickled by the idea that the letters of Jukes in the *Pastehorn* were powerful enough to weaken the position of one who had risen through so many difficulties to the lofty position attained by Louis Napoleon; but although he was amused, the last speaker was irritated, while many of his friends felt that such inopportune merriment rendered an apology necessary.

"I have not the slightest objection to apologise," said the stranger, "if you will first inform me how you have learnt that the French nation has been duped, how you came to know the plans of its ruler, who is supposed to have no confidants, and how many ships of war he is capable of sending to sea. Or, to set an easier task, if you can inform me whether England approves the policy of its government, what are the plans of our ministry, and how many ships we could send to sea in case of any war emergency arising. If you can speak so absolutely about the affairs and people of France, there can be no difficulty in dealing with the same class of facts in relation to our own free country."

It was astonishing what a measure of uneasiness was caused by these simple questions; every gentleman present had considered himself fully competent to speak upon such subjects, but when they were reduced into the tangible form presented in these questions, all felt their ignorance to be overwhelming. Generally, it was acknowledged that there was no one in the room competent to speak upon either of the subjects, they could only guess at an answer, and when the stranger pressed Mailer to state how many ships of war we possess, he confessed his inability to do so, "but," he added, "although I don't know the number we have, I do know that the French have more than us."

A smile passed over the stranger's face as he asked, "Can you tell the number within fifty?"

Mailer looked helplessly over to Smith, the schoolmaster, and seemed to hint a desire to be helped out of his difficulty; but Smith merely said that nobody knew, for one party set forth one number, and their opponents, with equal claims of knowing the truth, supplied another.

"Then," asked the stranger, "does it not occur to you as something remarkable, or even unbelievable, that while in this country, where everything is done in public, we do not know how many ships we have, we should be able to speak so definitely in relation to the number belonging to France? For my part," he continued, "I am convinced that it is all guess work; men first form opinions, and then create facts wherewith to support them, so that we are walking on the road to ruin by a borrowed light."

There was now a general cry for "the gentleman" to address the company, and to let them know what should, and what should not be believed upon the subject.

The stranger was a commercial traveller, who, having taken up his quarters for the night at the Flying Dutchman, had been informed by the waiter, while sitting alone in the commercial room, that there was a public meeting up-

stairs. He had joined it without any intention of taking part in its proceedings, but when he had heard the remarks about Louis Napoleon, incapable of remaining silent, he interposed in the manner just now reported. And when thus pressed to deliver his opinions, he did so without hesitation, or much caring about wounding the feelings of those unto whom he spoke. There was a visible sneer playing over his countenance when he rose, for, unlike the others, he spoke standing. "Gentlemen," said he, "you seem to be labouring under the delusion that Louis Napoleon is a fool."

"No, no," was immediately shouted by a dozen voices, "not a fool, but a rogue."

"But who else than a fool would think of invading England? You cannot impute foolish actions without calling him a fool! Louis Napoleon has but one hope for his dynasty, and that is peace with this country. They who hate and desire to overthrow him have but the one hope, that is, of a war between him and England. If he be not a fool, how will he play so falsely with his best hopes of success? Will he risk his throne in order to commence doing that which cannot be completed without involving him and his in utter ruin? To invade England is to throw down the gauntlet to Europe, for although the other nations do not love this country, they know what would be in store for them if he were its conqueror. They hate the principle upon which the French acted when placing him in power; they hate him also, and would gain their victory over him in such a war. Unless we suppose him to be blind to what everyone else can perceive, there is no reason for supposing he will undertake such a Quixotic measure in which nothing but ruin can follow. You say, and doubtless believe, that he will be compelled by the French Nation to engage in such a war, and this because of the defeat they encountered at Waterloo. But you should be aware of the fact that the French Nation never believed in that defeat as dependant upon the English armies. They believe that the victory was with their own army until the Prussians came to snatch it out of their hands, and it is exceedingly difficult to sustain in argument the contrary opinion. But apart from that, how can the French Nation compel him to make war upon England if it be true that he has enslaved it, and makes it subservient to his purposes? Some gentlemen have declared that France is the slave of his will, while others, as in this instance, make it out that he must be the slave of the National will. Then, gentlemen, you are dealing with him as a ruler, as the king of a great nation; and here, in Crosswood, without any personal knowledge of France, you seem to know all its wants and weaknesses. I am not so wise. I pretend not to understand either the wants or passions of France better than he does; and when I have the proof before me, as we all have, that he is attending to its interests, doing everything he can towards extending its commerce, towards promoting its manufactures, I am assured both of his practical aims and his wisdom. No French King has ever proposed to do as much for France as this man has accomplished; and as to the Republic, no sane man at all acquainted with the facts will venture upon setting it up as a model government. From the first hour of his obtaining possession he has pursued the policy of endeavouring to introduce practical measures, and we, in England, ought never to forget that it is not this country but France for which he is legislating. Surely, too, we can allow that nation to progress without being jealous."

"We are not jealous," interposed Mailler, "and least of all jealous of the French. What is there about them to make us jealous?"

"No, as a nation we are not, but we act as if we were; and it would be nonsense to deny that there are jealous men amongst us who do all in their power to keep up the feeling of hatred. Moreover, there are other monarchs in Europe whose lease of despotic power is threatened whenever these two great nations are in friendly union. The strength of Austrian injustice lies in the alienation of English from French hearts. We have persons in England who would use it in order to serve their own interests, and they are perpetually sowing the seeds of discord."

"Yes, that is just what I say," shouted Johnson. "A set of skulks as don't care a rap for any of us, but for what they can get out of our pockets."

"Well, but he wants to upset the balance of power, and to bring all Germany into one nation, so that he can do as he pleases with it."

"Pray tell me," resumed the stranger, "why should Germany remain in its present miserable condition, ruled by a set of dolt-headed princes, who care only for the honour and stability of their dynasties, but never give a thought to the people? Germany should become one great nation, and it must do so before it can take its proper place in the councils of Europe. If England and France remain at peace, that glorious reconstruction would be accomplished, and the miserable horde of princes would be swept away, leaving free scope for a nation's growth. This, however, cannot be done if any ill-will exists between England and France, because in that case the people are kept busy in their preparations for any war contingencies, and thus deterred from venturing upon any grave internal changes. In short, the policy of the German Courts is to keep alive the hatred between England and France, as the best and only available means of preventing reform at home. Unhappily, too, in this country, there are men, very high in position, who have never ceased to render those princes all the assistance in their power. Thus, the English weaver and labourer being persuaded that Napoleon intends attacking this country, consents to be heavily taxed in order to prevent him from succeeding in his aims; while they who clearly understand the facts, are galled at the duplicity, and anxious for the truth to be made clear. Their doctrine is, that if English waste were prohibited, European progress would be secured. And as to any danger from Napoleon, they would provide against it thus,—by making our own country to be the best and, relatively, the cheapest governed among nations. Let every cottager in England have justice, and then woe betide the man who is insane enough to attack us. That, however, will never be done by the present ruler of France, for, were it only a matter of policy, its costs and certain consequences render it clear that he will not be so unwise. He, of all men, is the least likely to undertake such a profitless task; and thus, entirely independent of what he may wish to do—although I do not believe that he wishes to fight us—the absolute certainty is that he will not enter into a state of war against us if in any reasonable manner it can be avoided. Of course it is in our power to force him into a fighting position; but, in that case, let us be honest enough to avow ourselves as the creators of that unhappy state of things."

It was quite evident that this speech made a deep impression upon the company, much deeper than they cared to acknowledge, for no one rose either to contradict or to confirm it. The chairman turned to another subject—"the character of the young rector," and his style of preaching—but this the stranger said he could not remain to listen to. Being pressed to remain he eventually consented, but as the conversation which followed proved to be both interesting and important, it demands a separate chapter to itself.

LIFE AND TEACHING OF ZOROASTER.

§ 5.—THE RECEPTION OF HEAVENLY WISDOM.

It was, then, into the presence of the Creator, Ormuzd, that Zoroaster was conveyed, and it was Ormuzd who answered his many questions. With strong desire to know the right, Zoroaster inquired, Which of thy servants on earth is superior? Ormuzd answered, "The righteous professor of righteousness; he who to righteousness joins generosity and liberality, walking unceasingly in the way of righteousness, and withdrawing from evil; he who is friendly to fire and water, to all living and animated beings; for man by the knowledge and practice of this precept delivers himself from hell, and attains to union with the eternal Paradise. O Zardusht! whichever of my servants in this transitory sojourn of existence practises oppression and cruelty towards my creatures, and averts his head from obedience to my commands, repeat thou to such this warning, that unless he desist from rebellion, he shall dwell in hell to all eternity."* Zoroaster now solicited that he might see and know the guardian angels who were most acceptable in the Divine sight. "Cause me to hear their discourse, and graciously enable me to discern the impious Ahriman, who through his evil nature turns not to good; give me power to behold the good and evil of this world, and its termination; the effect of the revolving sphere, with the successive production of modes (forms) or the reappearance of things." Ormuzd answered, "I am the author of good, the benevolent and the beneficent: I neither do evil nor enjoin it to be done by others. I consent not to wickedness, neither do I bring calamity on my creatures; evil and wickedness belong exclusively to Ahriman. It is, however, incumbent on me to keep in hell to all eternity the troops of Ahriman in reward for their deeds. Only the ignorant say I do evil." Zoroaster inquired, "In what manner shall thy worshippers celebrate thy praise, and what is to be their Kiblah?" To this question Ormuzd answered, "Tell all mankind that every bright and luminous object is the effulgence of my light; at the time of worshipping me let them turn to that side (to the light), in order that Ahriman may flee from them; in the world there is no existence superior to light, out of which I have created Paradise, the angelic nymphs, and all that is pleasant, whilst hell was produced out of darkness.

"Wherever thou art, and in whichever of the two abodes,

"Dost thou not perceive that either place is formed out of my light?"†

Here, however, is a passage somewhat higher, and one that reminds us of Jewish bards, it is still a part of this conversation with Ormuzd, but is given entirely up to a description of God. Zoroaster asks, "What is that sublime and delectable word which gives victory and diffuses light; which to man is the guide of life, which disappoints the efforts of the malignant spirit, and which gives health at once to the body and the soul?" Ormuzd answers, "That word is my name. I am called the God who loves to be consulted, the father of men and flocks, the powerful, the pure, the celestial, the seed of all that is good, the author and preserver of all that is pure, the sovereign intelligence, and he who communicates it; knowledge, and he who gives it; excellence, and he from whom it flows; the prince of holiness, the fountain of felicity, he in whom there is no evil, the strong who is not wearied; he who numbers and weighs all things, the giver of

* Dabís, 235.

+ Ibid. 239.

"health, the righteous judge; the being who is neither deceived nor deceives, "finally the God who recompenses. This is my name; have it continually "in thy mouth, and thou shalt have nothing to fear either from the bow or "the sword, neither from the javelin nor the lance, the spear nor the mace."* Such was the answer of Ormuzd, and when Zoroaster had heard it he fell down and worshipped, saying, "I adore the Intelligence of God, which contains "the Word, His understanding which meditates it, and His tongue which "pronounces it without ceasing. . . . I adore the sun who never dies, "who comes onward with the vigour of a horse radiant with light. When "he causes his influence to be felt, when he waxes hot, when he appears "with an hundred, with a thousand celestial spirits who accompany him. "He diffuses light through all nature; he scatters it like rain, and deals it "with profusion to the earth, which God has created; he is a fountain of "abundance to the world of purity; when he arises, he purifies the earth "and waters, the mountains and the valleys, the rivers and the lakes."† So that Zoroaster viewed the sun as the material symbol of Ormuzd, and did not worship it as a Divinity. Our readers will observe the mention of "The "Word." It would only encumber us at present were we to enter into any consideration of what or who is here meant. We read in Plato and in St. John about the Word, "In the beginning was the Logos," and a great deal of nonsense has been said about the meaning thereof, but when we come to consider the birth of Christ, and the Persianic influence which operated upon John, we shall understand the matter clearly enough.‡ It is, however, to be remembered, that in Zoroastrian Sacred Books the Primitive Word was first taught.

Zoroaster had petitioned to see the place of torment, and his petition was at once granted. Something like honey was given to him, on tasting which he lost all sense of his whereabouts for a time, then he saw a vision, and eventually, when recovered, Ormuzd inquired, "What hast thou seen?" He answers, "Oh, supreme ruler, I beheld in hell, along with Ahriman, many "wealthy persons who had been ungrateful in the world."§ Such he saw, with much more not now to be recited. Into hell, however, he went, and it is a curious fact that, as the Christian Fathers relate, Christ descended into hell, to visit the souls in prison, and, as many piously believe, to release some of them. So, also, Zoroaster secured the release of some he there saw confined. But the Zoroastrians turned to another source, the writing of Ardaï Veraf, to obtain full particulars respecting hell; here it appears that he surveyed it very minutely, having received the order from Ormuzd. Of course, it is like all others—all described by Buddha and the other religious founders. And when men say that Mahomet copied from the Christian books all he says of hell, they show their ignorance of the fact that hell has not been described with any detail in any of our "sacred writings." There is, however, one point connected with this not to be overlooked. God ordered Zoroaster thus to instruct mankind in relation to eternity of punishments: "Say thou to man—"kind, they are not to abide in hell for ever; when their sins are expiated, "they are to be delivered out of it!"

So that for them, too, there is hope, which, to say the least, is a blessed idea. A kind of purgatory, then, as the Park Street Chapel people would call it, and a Popish idea, as many of our Exeter Hall friends will say. Be it so, and for their sakes, we will hope it is true, as, doubtless, themselves will

* Annual Register for 1762, pt. 2, p. 120.

† See the "Life of Christ," by the Author, vol. 1.

‡ Jescho.

§ Davis, i. 265.

hope by-and-bye. Grim, and altogether unlovely, thoughts will rise in the mind occasionally when we hear so much of the young men who so liberally deal out death and damnation to mankind. For, after all that may be said about the talents, it will still stand as true that it is only ignorance of man that prompts us to infliction of stern punishment. Any soul can be revengeful; it is only the noble that can forgive, or conceive of a loving forgiveness. He who constantly waves a naked sword over his head is neither the most likely to preserve the peace of a city nor to win the love of the most worthy among the citizens.

It may probably be of some value to our readers to learn that writings of these events were common in the early Christian ages. Zoroaster was then treated with far more respect by Christian authors than in more modern days. The testimony of the Christian Father and Church historian may be cited to show that in the fourth century of the Christian era there existed a collection of sacred works relating to the theology and religion of the Persians, and from occasional notices, we are aware of the fact that they were universally quoted. But the Gnostic sects endeavoured to blend the two systems, and were particularly clear upon the point that future punishment was certain. Mani said: "The souls that have allowed themselves by the love of the world to be seduced from their original nature of light, and have become enemies to the holy light,—all who, openly arming themselves to destroy the holy elements, and having entered into the service of the fiery spirit, have, by their deadly persecution of the holy church, and of the elect who are found therein, oppressed the observers of the heavenly commandments,—all such will be precluded from the blessedness and glory of the holy earth. And since they have allowed themselves to be overcome by evil, they shall for ever abide with this race of evil; so that the peaceful earth and the realms of immortality shall be shut against them. This shall happen to them because they have so devoted themselves to evil works as to become alienated from the life and freedom of the holy light. They will not be able, then, to find admittance into that kingdom of peace, but shall be chained to that frightful mass (of matter or darkness left to itself) over which a watch is also necessary. These souls, therefore, shall continue to cleave to the things they have loved, since they did not separate themselves from them when the opportunity arose." It is clear that, in his doctrine of the last things, Mani did not agree either with Buddhism or with the Zoroastrian or the Christian system, but, by the fusion of the three, formed a peculiar theory of his own.

P. W. P.

THE FREE CHURCH, NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD ST.

DISCOURSES BY DR. P. W. PERFITT.

- Sunday Morning, Aug. 11.—"Religious Reformation and the Order of Nature."
 " " " 18.—"Of the Universal Presence and Natural Religion."
 " " " 25.—"The Standard of Human Capacity and the Knowledge of God."
 " " Sept. 1.—"Our Knowledge of God obtained by means of Revelation."
 " " " 8.—"The Worship of God, and its Historical Development."
 " " " 15.—"The Nature of Evil, and its Relation to Human Life."

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXXI.

THE HUSSITE WAR.

Huss was murdered, but the work of blood was not complete; the Heresiarch was dead, but his most active coadjutor was yet alive. Huss had been silenced (or so the Council hoped), but his blood yet spake. The voice of Huss resounded through the after-time, until its echo was caught up and mingled with the giant voice of Luther, and became then the witness, not of martyrdom, but of victory. Huss was, however, silenced, so far as it was in the power of the Church to silence him; but Jerome of Prague still lived. He was in their clutches, and should he be allowed to escape, to undo all they hoped to have done in quelling the Bohemian heresy? They knew not, or cared not to know, that to do that they must put to death many more than Jerome. At least, this victim shall not escape. Thirteen days after Huss's martyrdom, Jerome, weak and emaciated, was brought from the dungeon in which he had been confined. Jerome, a man of impulse, had never walked steadily through life; and now, when it became a question of denying the truth, or dying for it, he faltered in his purpose and recanted. But for a moment only; it was the weakness of a noble man—a weakness, too, which humanity must forgive, even had he not nobly redeemed it. He retracted his recantation, and a few months after suffered the same fate as his master.

The close of the Council followed soon after the death of Jerome. How had it performed its purposed mission? It had partially, and only partially, succeeded in healing the schism in the Church by the deposition and enforced submission of two of the three contending Popes, John XXIII. and Gregory XII., and the election of Martin V. Old Benedict XIII., however, refused to submit, and while he lived continued twice a-day to fulminate anathemas against Martin, whose title he disputed, and who only when Benedict died became sole Pope. The contemplated Reformation the Council had left for Martin to work out; but no sooner was he seated in his new dignity than he revoked all his promises, or, in other words, played the traitor in the matter. The Clergy, therefore, remained unreformed, either in its head or members; a result not wonderful, considering that the Council, which projected the Reform and elected Martin, consisted of the very men that needed reforming. Their principal work, indeed, was that in which they thought they had succeeded—the attempt to crush Reform in the persons of John Huss and Jerome. But “this Huss, burnt, resuscitated in Jerome, and burnt again, is “so far from being dead, that he returns ere long in the shape of a great, an “armed people, sword in hand.” The Church had not yet done with Huss or with Wycliffe; and after the closing of the great Council, which was to extirpate erroneous and heretical doctrines, she is still fighting Hussites in Bohemia, and burning Lollards in England.

The martyrdom of Huss and Jerome spread like wild-fire through Bohemia. So wide-spread was the feeling of horror at the treachery and murder of which the Church had been guilty, that the whole Bohemian nation flew to arms to revenge their deaths. Another crusade for the extermination of these Bohemian heretics, even as the Albigenes of old, is preached. Sigismund, the forsworn traitor, who sat on the imperial throne of Germany, leads the armies of the Church, while Zisca is the name of the Hussite commander. A war without mercy on either side now commences. Huss was martyred in 1415, and in 1454 the war, caused by his martyrdom, was still raging, and

crusades were being preached in Germany for the extermination of the obstinate heretics of Bohemia. Exterminated, however, they never were; for when more than a century after the death of Huss the voice of Luther resounded through Bohemia, in common with other lands, it was "welcomed by a " numerous body of hereditary Reformers, who rejected, and whose ancestors " had rejected, the sacrifice of the mass, purgatory, transubstantiation, prayers " for the dead, the adoration of images; and who confirmed their spiritual " emancipation by renouncing the authority of the Pope."* Indeed, the Hussites live still in the Moravian Brethren of these days.

Sigismund, the Emperor, we have said, led the armies of the Church, and more than one of the reigning powers in Europe became implicated in that Hussite war ere it ended. Yes! the unholy alliance between Priestcraft and Kingcraft is now complete. A fact which must be borne in mind, if the after history of Europe, and especially of the Reformation, is to be understood. In that unholy alliance, which since the human mind began to progress beyond the superstitious stage—since mankind began to refuse entire submission to the priest, the Church has sought to render ever more and more complete, we see—what? We see the source of some of the foulest deeds that disgrace the page of history—some of the blackest crimes against humanity that have ever been committed. Does any man doubt? Let him look at the history of Austria, read the annals of Spain, consider the black tale of Neapolitan tyranny—nay, let him look no further than this very Hussite struggle, and he shall see the work of Kingcraft taught by priests, and Priestcraft supported by kings. We see, moreover, in that unholy alliance, the means by which the Church, on the one hand, trading on the credulity and mental slavery of the mass of men, and the State, on the other, profiting by the absence of political freedom, have sought, nay, are at this moment seeking—to prevent the coming of that day when men shall be really free—free in soul and body too. The priest, in his weakness, seeks a factitious strength by becoming the tool of kings, whose aid is lent that he may be the more useful tool. And let none think that these considerations belong wholly to the Past, for they have much significance even in the Present. The alliance of which we have spoken is by no means destroyed. And if the issues of the great Reformatory movement, which, in these articles, it is our object to portray, were not all they might have been, let us not forget that one cause of this was the aid given to Priestcraft by kings. This reflection, however, may console us, that the work then left undone is our heritage; that it is ours to achieve, if we will, those issues which were then frustrated.

It has been well said that the dying embers of Huss's funeral pile kindled the mountain fires of Bohemia, and the desire of avenging the death of the martyr became the watchword of hundreds of thousands of armed men. Led by the one-eyed Zisca, the Hussites dealt death among their foes, and the hollow truce completed by Sigismund was only a breathing time, ended by renewed years of slaughter. Like all religious wars, it was a war without mercy; but one deed, accomplished by the troops of the Church, stands horrible on the page of history—almost unique in its devilish cruelty. A large number of the Hussites had fallen prisoners into the hands of the Church troops; they laid down their arms on the promise that no harm should come to them; and, believing the promise, they gathered all together into certain barns, which they were informed they might use for shelter. Thus decoyed to their destruction, they had no sooner all entered than the gates were closed

* Waddington. Church Hist., p. 603.

upon them, and the buildings set on fire. In this way many thousands were roasted alive. And Priestcraft sang its *Te Deums* at the event; and blessed the inhuman wretches who perpetrated this vile and hideous deed.

The age was drunk with passion and with blood. Thus hunted to death by the Church, the truth taught by Huss developed and branched off into heresies of manifold and fantastic kinds. As ever in such circumstances, religion became fanaticism. As an illustration of this we may mention the Adamites—a sect of the Hussites, one among many others that might be mentioned—who taught (and practically exemplified the teaching) that the primitive innocence which they believed belonged to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, would be restored to the world if mankind would return to the state of natural nudity which they supposed distinguished their first parents. The effect produced by this may be imagined but cannot be described. Take this fact too, that when Procop, one of the Hussite leaders, fell in battle, his followers tanned his skin and made thereof a drum, which “beat through Germany its murderous roll,” making martial music in many a future contest. This was the century, also, when the remarkable phenomenon appeared which is known as the “Dance of Death,” a phenomenon which in those days must have appeared all the more terrible, seeing that the science of that time would fail to find any sufficient explanation of it. Modern science, however, explains it as a result arising from the shock which the nervous systems of men sustained by the manifold miseries of the time, and the morbid state of mind engendered by the universal terror which reigned through Europe, and the equally universal spiritual death.

Extremes meet, they say; and even as Tragedy easily slides into Farce, so the accumulated horrors—physical and spiritual—which marked this age, found expression in this maniacal dance, equally terrible and absurd. The Dance of Death became general in many countries of Europe. One would suddenly begin a convulsive dance in the street, presently a passer-by would seize his hand, then another and another. Round and round they whirl; bystanders looking coldly on ere long find a strange sensation creeping over them, the eye growing dim, the head confused, and involuntarily the coolest and most self-possessed would join the frenzied groups. Round and round they whirl, faster and faster, the circle growing larger and larger every moment with fresh additions. Presently a fresh circle would be formed, and on they went increasing, interlacing, growing vaster, blinder, more rapid, and more phrenzied, every instant. Down the streets of cities and towns they pass, whirling in this mad galop, men and women and children, people even rushing from their houses to join the fearful throng of dancers. Nothing will stop them while the circle remains entire; they will dance themselves into Eternity unless the chain can be broken. On they go, whirling and spinning with all the might that is in them, every nerve convulsed in the dreadful effort. And only when some bystander is wise enough to break the circle will they cease; he must do it without waiting to look, or he too will begin to dance like the rest. The age, in fact, was mad, delirious. 'Twas time a change should come. Such, then, were some of the fearful results of injustice and passion, so much of which arose out of the state into which Priestcraft had forced humanity, for, as has been well said by Michelet (to whom we are indebted in the above description), it was men's souls which were agitated by convulsions and vertigo, not their bodies merely.

In all these things there is, however, an important teaching for us men of the present, which we must not overlook. We have progressed, it is said,

far beyond the men of that time, and the saying is a true one, but let us be careful of giving it a wider application than it deserves. We have progressed; the Black Plagues and other pestilences which then decimated mankind so frequently no longer afflict us. They had their source in the ignorance of God's laws, which led them to leave their cities undrained, themselves uncleaned,—to ignore, in fact, the laws of physical health. They have been destroyed and conquered, by what? By a better scientific knowledge, by an earnest search after the laws which govern man's physical existence, and by careful attention thereto, freed from the prejudices which were based upon the ignorance of that old time. We are, therefore, safe from the recurrence of those dreadful scourges. But are we free from the plague of fanaticism; are we as safe from the recurrence of the morbid moral phenomena of that time? We are not; nor does it need that the evidence should now be adduced, for all who are capable of learning aught from it are already but too well-acquainted with it. True, the disease spreads not so wide as in that old time, because the mental strength ensured by our progress in other fields, stands in the way of its becoming so widespread; but still the facts of our time shew its existence among us. Nor will it be uprooted until we make our religion scientific; until with a freedom from prejudice equal to that with which the exact sciences are studied, we seek the laws of moral health; until, in short, we destroy the source of fanaticism by uprooting Priestcraft; and dare to be as reasonable and active and free in urging on religious progress, as the wisest amongst us are in advancing scientific discovery.

JAS. L. GOODING.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PR. D.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

(Continued from p. 80.)

BUT returning to Elijah, we find that he has gone on the way towards Samaria, and there he met Obadiah, a minister of Ahab's. We are informed that so severe had been the pressure of famine, that the king resolved to search the land in one way, and ordered Obadiah to search in another, to see if there could any springs be found beside which the cattle could be kept alive. Obadiah was out on this mission when he met Elijah, and the following conversation ensued: "And as Obadiah was on his way, behold Elijah met him; and Obadiah knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hands of Ahab, to slay me? As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me. And Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I

"stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to-day. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah."*

That Ahab in his anger and misery had diligently sought after Elijah is perfectly consistent with the idea common to the age, and to which I alluded in my last week's lecture. It was generally supposed that the prophet had wickedly put a spell upon the land—the famine was believed to be the consequence of his supernatural arts. The idea is not represented as having entered the mind of Ahab or any of his people, that the famine, with all its horrors and miseries, had come as a punishment from God, else we may be sure there had been some change in his conduct, for man, as we know him to be constituted, is not capable of consciously fighting against the Divinity—he cannot knowingly take up arms to war with God. To the king it seemed perfectly clear that the famine was dependant upon Elijah; the prophet was considered as the sole cause; he had cursed, or placed the land under a ban, and that "the prophet's curse," or command, would be fulfilled, was the universally settled conviction in the mind of the king and people. Hence it was that when Ahab came into the presence of Elijah his first question was, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" indicating, as clearly as language can indicate, that the thought which was then uppermost in his mind was that Elijah had been the sole cause, and was the only responsible instrument, of the agonies, the sufferings, and the deaths, which he as a monarch had been compelled to witness.

But the consequences of his interview were most memorable. According to the narrative Elijah boldly told Ahab that it was the wickedness of himself and of his father's house which had troubled Israel, and then followed up his charge by demanding that the king should collect together the priests of Baal, and those who had their meat from the table of Jezebel. "Bring them all together," said he, "to Mount Carmel."

It has been urged that if what is said were true—that Ahab had previously sought after the life of Elijah—he would not now have obeyed, but would have seized and bound him; but they who thus speak cannot have sufficiently studied human nature. Ahab thought, when Elijah was at a distance, that, could he but take him, he would compel him to remove the spell, but when standing in the presence of the prophet he discovered himself to be impotent. The terror of his power as a prophet bound both the hand and tongue of the king, and he could neither injure nor order any injury to be inflicted upon him. And, indeed, were we to abandon the argument derived from the supernatural, still the superiority of Elijah's mental resources was enough to bind the weak king, and to render him powerless. The man of strong will must conquer the man whose will is weak, and hence the positive victory achieved upon this occasion.

But upon Mount Carmel it is arranged that the prophets shall be brought together, and in order to realise the whole scene we must enter fully into its spirit. Say that it is but a fancy piece, still, the man who drew it was a master, and a finer dramatic scene was never got together. Mount Carmel stands upon the coast of Palestine, and rises nearly two thousand feet above the water, as the highest peak of a range of mountains of the same name. It resembles a flattened cone, and is certainly one of the finest and most beautiful mountains in that land. The base of the mountain was washed by the ancient river—the river Kishon, while the plain of Sharon spread out towards the south. We are told by enlightened travellers, that "the prospect from the summit over the gulf of Acre and its fertile shores, and over the blue heights of Lebanon, and the white cape, is truly enchanting;"—that "in front the view extends to the distant horizon, over the dark blue waters of the Mediterranean;"—that "behind stretches the great plain of Esdraelon, and the mountains of the Jordan and Judæa;"—that "below, on the right hand, settles the little city of Acre, diminished to a mere speck; while in the far distance beyond, the eye rests upon the summits of Lebanon, and turning to track the coast on the left hand, takes in the ruins of Cæsarea, the city of Herod and of the Roman sovereigns of Palestine." It

* 1 Kings, xviii. 7-16.

gave rise to a multitude of crystal brooks, and everywhere its olives and its laurel trees were plentifully watered. It was an enclosure of vineyards and of gardens, while the pine and the oak waved in majesty and beauty on its summit. We have it on the best authority, that while Lebanon raised to heaven a point of naked and barren rocks, which were covered during the greater part of the year with snow, the top of Carmel, how naked and sterile soever its present appearance, was clothed with perennial verdure.* Here, then, were they to gather themselves together, the priests of Baal, against Elijah, all standing fairly up upon the lofty slopes, so that the assembled people should be enabled to see what was going on. And, curiously enough, Ahab is reported to have sent to all the children of Israel to gather the prophets (of Baal) as if he had actually believed in them. The common theory is, that the descendants of Abraham could not believe in the Gods of neighbouring countries—could, in fact, only play false with Jehovah by pretending to believe them, but unless we abandon the knowledge which our fathers have accumulated, we shall be constrained to confess that the King really believed—whether rightly or wrongly, it does not here matter—in the power of Baal. Men are not in the habit of risking much when they have not only no faith in the scheme but the certainty of defeat. And Ahab could hardly have called them together unless under the impression that they would be able to uphold the reputation of their tutelar deity.

But now the day has arrived, and the people are gathering. Onward they come from the country around, little doubting that the victory will be with the greater number. In fancy we see them ascending the mountain sides, until at length of Baal's priests there were four hundred and fifty, and it was in a tone of exultation that they asked—Where is Elijah now? He was not there; he had not arrived early, and many who joined the crowd to look on were not a bit surprised at his non-appearance. Doubtless in the motley assemblage of beholders were many who trembled lest he should not come, and thus, that a slight should be put upon the honour of their God. They were of the faithful but timorous class, men who do not dream of proving false to their early faith, and yet who have not courage or strength enough to believe in its final triumph! Their fears were unnecessary, for behold in the distance comes the man for whom all have been looking. Elijah approached the people, and said:—"How long halt ye between two opinions? if 'the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him. And the people "answered him not a word."† How could they answer? Men halt between two opinions, because wishing to be on the side of truth, and having no certainty upon the point, they desired to have the weight of evidence which would turn the scales and give them the satisfaction they stood in need of. They were a waiting, wandering, and ignorant people, not knowing whether Baal or Jehovah were the true God, and after all, it perhaps did not matter. Baal and Jehovah are but two names for the one Supreme. These two parties believed in one absolute God, and it could not matter how that one was named. The writer of the narrative saw not that, but he saw that proof was required, and so goes on to furnish it:—"Then said "Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's "prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two "bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, "and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, "and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and call ye on the name of your gods, "and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, "let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken."‡ What else could they say? It was to be a mighty trial in the face of Israel, and granting the premises, as we must do in order to come at the spirit of the story, the conditions were fair enough. "And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, "Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and "call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock "which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from "morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor

* Consecrated Heights, 176, 177.

† 1 Kings, xviii. 21.

‡ Ibid. 22-24.

"any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud : for he is a god ; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them."*

All this seems to indicate their belief in Baal. But Elijah had his course open. "And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name : and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord : and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar ; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces : and they said, The Lord, he is the God ; the Lord, he is the God."†

A modern critic, astonished at the sceptical spirit prevailing in this age, quotes this "mighty miracle," and triumphantly asks what any reasonable man can require more than this to satisfy his mind that the Bible is an inspired record, and that all its narratives are true. Probably he was at a loss for some sentences wherewith to conclude his paragraph, else we can hardly believe he would be so absurd as to overlook that it is proof of the historical truth of stories which men are so eagerly enquiring after. They cannot accept marvellous stories until their source is proven to be beyond the bounds of mistake or misrepresentation.

* 1 Kings, xviii. 25-28.

† Ibid. 29-39.



(To be continued.)

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.

CHAPTER XIII.

BEER, PIETY, AND SCANDAL AT THE "FLYING DUTCHMAN."

THERE are but few topics of conversation upon which residents in country towns love more to enter than upon that of the orthodoxy of their minister; they are delighted to criticise his sermons, to modify or repair his doctrines, and very gravely to declare how much he stands in need of in order to elevate him to their standard of perfection. It is a favourite theory of the age that the pulpit exerts great authority in moulding the character of the people; neither does it seem prudent for a man who desires to enjoy the smiles of society totally to deny that assertion, but at the same time it may be familiarly or confidentially whispered that its authority is far more theoretical than practical. There was a time when it accomplished its purposes, and stood as the great centre of hope and progress; but it has become a servant, and no longer wields the baton of the master; its occupants are bound down and circumscribed by the views of a few "leading" men, who form part of the congregations—men who, as a rule, undertake to solve all religious problems, to fix the estimate of every member's character, and to determine the question whether the minister is sound in his doctrines. Especially in small country towns, it frequently happens that the tongues of both dissenting and clerical preachers are tied upon various subjects about which they desire to speak—they are watched and criticised, approved or condemned, by wretched cliques, who possess neither judgment nor moral feeling, and they dare not utter their convictions lest peradventure offence should be taken by their richer and more influential supporters. One clergyman is prohibited from speaking against the miserable system of cottage accommodation, now so common in England, because, if he set forth the truth, that it is the scandal of our modern civilisation, he cannot avoid giving unpardonable offence to the knights and squires, who honour God and compliment the preacher by giving

Vol. VI. NEW SERIES, Vol. II.

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the latter their attention. They hold it to be the solemn duty of the parish priest rather to preach men into content with things as they are—to make them recognise with gladness the difficulties of this present life—than to decry the conduct and systems of their superiors, and to rouse a spirit of rebellion in the breast of the poor. Many clergymen who could not submit to this degrading serfdom, who would boldly speak their convictions, have discovered that, with some honourable exceptions, the doors of the wealthy are closed to all such “democrats;” but, fortunately for England, and even when such subjects are suggested, there are not wanting those who can cast aside all chances of securing material comfort rather than surrender their right of free speech, or abandon the path of duty. There are still priests who will stand up for the Justice of God in favour of the poor.

In these days there has been much debating and serious talk about Temperance Societies, and although, from the established platforms and through the temperance press, a great deal of nonsense has been uttered by the advocates, it seems to be generally conceded that the great difficulty of the age lies in inducing the poorer classes to rise superior to the drinking passion. The gin palace is confessedly the high road to ruin, and yet the rich owners, with those who keep them open, are highly esteemed in our religious congregations. It is an astonishing fact, that the great brewers and spirit merchants are among the “most pious men” in England; they hate vice, but not the wealth it brings them. They confess that many of the poor are killing themselves with drink, but still undertake to pay large sums to get the houses into their own hands in which the people congregate to purchase destruction. Rightly or wrongly, many ministers have reached the conclusion that there is a contradiction in this course of conduct, but the majority among them dare not speak, lest they offend and drive the traffickers away from church.

Lester had not been a month at Crosswood before he launched out against the entire system, arguing that they who consented to make profit by selling that which they knew to be a temptation to vice—a temptation which scores of men could not resist, were not abstaining from all appearance of evil, but were actually doing evil, with their eyes fully opened to the results. Probably he was too warm in some of his denunciations, and it may be that he had not fully discriminated between those who were innocent because of being ignorant, and those who were guilty because they knew all the consequences. Still he must be apologised for, upon the ground that he was judging the morality of the causes by the fearful consequences, which were alike in both cases. He had the day before been visiting a family in great distress, but to his astonishment had learnt that when in health the husband was in the habit of earning not less than thirty shillings a-week, a sum which in Crosswood, and properly managed, was quite equal to two pounds in a large city. He found that the children had been sent to a charity school, that the woman was in the habit of receiving various Church and other gifts, and that altogether their annual receipts were above those of many little tradesmen, who were compelled to pay their way, and to maintain a respectable appearance. The house was most wretchedly furnished; there was nothing either decent or clean in its small rooms, and the whole secret of its misery lay in the drunken habits of the husband. The family were then receiving an allowance from the parish, and they who had not earned so much as this mechanic were taxed to pay for his neglect. On the opposite side of the street stood the house in which the money had been spent, and the poor wife, when questioned, did not hesitate to declare, that while her husband had a penny

in his pocket he was received as a welcome visitor, "for," she continued, "although the people who keeps it goes to church, they never minds taking the money for beer which they knows our children should have for bread." It was this, and many similar scenes and narratives, which had operated upon Lester's mind, causing him to speak very strongly in his sermon, and it was evident, before he had got half through it, that many of his hearers were highly offended.

On the following day he was waited upon by a wine and spirit merchant of his congregation, who protested against the sermon, declaring it to be insulting to himself as a Christian, and a libel upon a body of British tradesmen; to which he added, that, if the rector intended to insult the congregation by denouncing the habits and daily calling of respectable men, he, for one, should withdraw from the Church. Lester bravely and cleverly defended his sermon, but his arguments were powerless, and finding that it was impossible in any other way to satisfy his visitor, he plainly asked this question:—

"Do you believe, Sir, that either our Lord Jesus Christ or the Apostle Paul would have kept a gin palace?"

The spirit merchant started as if he had been stung by a snake, and declared himself astonished that such a profane question should have been proposed by an English clergyman.

"There is no profanity in it," said Lester. "The fact is that you are pained at the suggestion, because, whatever custom may have done to blunt your moral perception, in your inmost nature you know it to be wrong to gain money in such ways. If you cannot believe that the Apostle Paul would keep a gin-shop, it must be because of believing it to be wrong to keep such shops open. You hear, without any pain, that Jesus worked as a carpenter, and that Paul mended nets, and if you were not conscious that the gin-shop calling is less honourable than they are, you would not feel offended at the suggestion."

The assailant was silenced, but not satisfied; he felt the force of Lester's reply, but having so much money embarked in the business he was not prepared to abandon it, and hence his mind was turned towards proving its perfect morality. As one means of satisfying his conscience, he never lost an opportunity of retailing certain portions of this conversation, while "innocently" holding his tongue about those portions which explained and justified the rector's question. This, coupled with many similar hard hits against prevailing systems, and much plainness of speech, had operated to cast a shade of suspicion upon the rector, and there was scarcely a person in the town who did not feel to be in a state of doubt respecting what his opinions were.

The Chairman introduced the subject named at the close of the last chapter, the character of the new rector, without making many observations. "I have heard," he said, "that the new rector—Mr. Lester—is a curious sort of a man,—a man very much given to strange ways; nobody seems to understand him; and certainly he has proved himself to be no friend to the Bible Society. Then, too, his sister is much about the same, and a very curious body; her opinions are very questionable, for, as Mrs. Straddles says, she is terribly opposed to missionary societies. I know, gentlemen," he continued, "that our much-respected friends Mr. Wellbeloved and Mr. Uriah Irons went, a short time ago, to see the rector, as a deputation, and as some very strange—particularly strange—remarks were made by that gentleman to them, we should be glad to learn what they were, so as to know

how to deal with him should he really be—as I very much fear he is—a wolf in sheep's clothing."

Wellbeloved had instantly informed many of his friends of the rector's refusal to join the Bible Society's Committee, and, as was usual with him, he had done it in the flourishing style which conveyed far more than Lester intended. And, as he had come to the meeting this evening with the knowledge that the subject was to be introduced and discussed, it will not be unfair to say that he had come primed and loaded for the occasion; but the unexpectedly long discussion about the French Emperor had discomposed his mind, so that when he began to speak it was with an air of wandering, confusion, and indirectness.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I am much obliged and honoured by the Chairman calling upon me to bring such an important matter before this important assembly. I am no great talker, and yet now and then I manage to make a speech. I can only say that I'll tell you all about it. The fact is, that, with my respected Christian friend on my right, Mr. Uriah Irons, I called upon the rector, and was very much astonished to find, not only that he did not approve of sending Bibles abroad, but that he as good as said that if we did not educate the savages, it was no use to teach them the Gospel. Plainly enough he meant that the Bible is no good for the saving of poor heathen, or perhaps any other, souls."

"There is no knowing what the world is coming to," interposed the little barber, "for when a man takes pay for doing his work properly, and then don't do it at all, but runs it down, what are we to think? Why do we have rectors at all, if it be not to tell the truth, and teach that there is nothing at all anywhere like the Bible?"

It was evident that the present company knew not what good to think of their rector; there was a seeming unanimity in denouncing him as a wicked impostor, and several speakers rose in succession to state how their own fears and suspicions had been aroused and confirmed.

Rinkorn, the tinsmith, prefaced his remarks with the observation that, "Christians should be charitable in dealing with one another."

"But," he continued, "I never liked his taking that pale-faced huzzy, Julia Simson, who had a bastard, into his house as serving girl, while there were so many decent ones that wanted a place. It's all very well to talk about charity, and forgiveness, and the Magdelines, and so on, and if we have not charity, as St. Paul says, we are nothing else than tinkling brass; but that is not charity; and," he significantly added, "I, that knows a thing or two, I say, depend upon it there will soon be another brat for the parish to provide for."

The positive grossness of this insinuation did not tend to make it unacceptable, but, on the contrary, seemed rather to render it pleasant to the majority of hearers. Not that they had heard any imputations against, or seen anything immoral in Lester; in fact, both his nature and engagements were of such a character as to render impossible for him either directly or indirectly to justify their thoughts; but although believing themselves to be the most religious among men, and feeling themselves competent to decide upon the most important questions, they were still under the influence of the lower passions, and imagined that Lester was even as they were.

Masters, the organist, a man of great musical genius, who ought to have defended his pastor, was delighted with the opportunity of casting his stone of censure. He was a drunken, but not an absolutely vicious and abandoned

man; it was impossible for him to carry one shilling in his pocket past the Flying Dutchman, or any other decent house. He could not sit down to drink with ploughmen or tinkers, for their conversation revolted his taste, but he would drink away his last penny, and then beg from any passenger the price of another pint. When in a sober condition, there was not a man in the country-side who could equal him in giving a music lesson, but the difficulty was in making him keep an engagement so as to give an unbroken series. He played at the church, and Lester at first treated him with great kindness, but on discovering his failing, he felt so much disgusted that a man of such acquirements should descend so low, that he treated him with proportionate coldness, and lectured him with no slight measure of severity. This Masters resented, conceiving that it was pride which had prompted the rector thus to speak, although half-conscious that it was a better feeling; but half-muddled, and roused by the conversation, he said, "Depend upon it he is a proud stuck-up man, who knows no more about religion than my flute knows about science. He is a greedy fellow, for when I proposed to him to lend me a shilling he positively refused, and when I offered to go to the rectory one or two evenings a week with my instrument to accompany his sister, and give her a few finishing lessons, he declined, and seemed to say that he did not think I was good enough to sit beside Ella Lester. He is a proud, selfish, uncharitable fellow, and I believe it will turn out before long, that he—"

The stranger had hitherto listened attentively to the speakers, but judging from his manner, he seemed to feel dissatisfied with himself for spending time with men, who, in intellectual power were so far beneath the average of those with whom he mingled. Unable to resist speaking, he here sarcastically observed,

"Probably the rector—having regard to keeping men out of temptation—considered it to be his duty to refuse the shilling, and it may have been a perfect act of brotherly kindness to the gentleman who spoke last, which dictated that he should not expose him to the danger of looking ridiculous before the lady, which, judging from appearances, would not be improbable."

"Perhaps so," remarked Uriah Irons, "for we all know the weakness of our respected friend Mr. Masters, but it is upon quite other grounds that I have made up my mind to bear testimony, according to the Scriptures, against Mr. Lester. The fact is, that he is not a sound man—his doctrines are calculated to deceive even the elect if it were possible. That, however, cannot be, and therefore it is I am so sure his teaching is not sound. Last Sunday he preached a sermon upon Human Freedom, in which he said we were all free to choose our own path—that we make or mar our spiritual happiness, and, that as we must condemn them who do evil, so we are called upon to praise them who do good; and he then went on, like a fiend devil-inspired, trying to persuade the people that they are what they are, just according to their own free will. Now we all know—all of us that know anything—that it is not so. I'm no scholar, but I know well enough that the Bible says as plainly as it can be said, that it is not ourselves, but God who does with us whatsoever He pleases—He works out His own will with us exactly as He likes, and it's all nonsense or sin to say any other than what it so clearly teaches."

Uriah was a Calvinist of the purest water, in fact, had he been anything else, it must have been at the expense of becoming one of the most miserable and self-condemned among men. He was a lazy man, who kept jobs in his shop so long that those who had left them were almost ashamed of calling so

often to inquire if they were complete; he was a table sensualist, eating and drinking largely and costly at hotels, and when his wife, as frequently happened, was compelled to show him the empty cupboards, and to state the ragged condition of the juvenile wardrobes, he invariably solaced himself with the theory that if there were want in the house, it was "according to the decrees of Providence, who had irrevocably settled everything, even to the number of our hairs, before we were born."

This fatalism was the only excuse he could make to justify his scandalous neglect of his family, and he was proportionately irritated when Lester boldly maintained the doctrines of human freedom.

But there were others present, "united," as they said, "in the same faith and bound in the same bonds of Christian love," who "did not repudiate the rector because of his ideas of human freedom," for as they stated, and fully believed, those doctrines to be according to the Scriptures; they objected on the ground that he was "constantly harping upon the infidel doctrines, that it is through what men do, not through what they think, that they are to win the favour of God."

Brother Alsopp, the toy merchant, gave it as his opinion that the rector intended "to undermine the whole Christian faith, for," said he, "it is but a month ago last Sunday, I heard him say in his sermon, that error in religion was not anything near so bad as sin in morals; and then he went on arguing, that believing in Jesus would do a man no good in the other world, unless he gave good weight and spoke the truth while he was in this one. Now I know that none of us, and we are all business men, can get a living unless we do as other people do, both in weight and measure; and every Christian man has learned the beautiful truth that it is our faith, and not our works that is a saving power. Works are but filthy rags, but faith is a divine robe, and they who wear it must be safe."

Others of the company were ready and delivered their objections, until at length the stranger, whose face indicated the irritation of his mind, rose to say how much he had been pained by the conversation he had heard.

"Gentlemen," he continued, "I was annoyed at hearing a number of men sitting in judgment upon a foreign ruler, who, when questioned, very freely and candidly admitted themselves to be ignorant of the facts; but how much more painful is it to hear you all crying against a man, unto whom every one of you will take off your hats to-morrow. You publicly accept him as your guide, and then privately attack his reputation. I know him not, but from what you have admitted, I judge him to be both a religious man and a gentleman—plain spoken, perhaps incautious. You boast of freedom, and yet desire to deny its enjoyment to him, and while talking about religion as if all of it that is ever to be in the world depended upon yourselves, you manifest a want of charity that shows you to be ignorant of its real constitution."

Here a clamour arose in the room, some repudiating the charges, some declaring him to be a French spy, and others that he was sent by the rector. His voice, however, which was strong and steady, rose above the sounds of mutiny, as he said—

"You invited me to remain and take part in the proceedings, and while I have a drop of English blood in my veins, I will never descend to the baseness of attacking an unarmed man, or of assisting by my silence in ruining the reputation of one who is not present to defend himself."

This bold vindication operated to procure silence, when he thus closed his remarks,

"You do not know me, and never will do so, but the passing stranger ventures upon advising you all to be a little more modest, a great deal more honest, and, above all, for a year at least, to make no pretences of religion. You may hunt down your rector, but that will do you no more good than killing your doctor because he gives bitter draughts. It will be far better for you to admit that you are merely playing a part, and to begin once more by being less virtuous in appearance and more so in action."

Here the tumult recommenced, and, as it was twelve o'clock, the landlord cleared the room, sending each man home to profit by what he had heard; that is, supposing them to be capable of deriving profit therefrom, which is more than doubtful. The little barber considered the stranger to be exceedingly impertinent, and therefore would not trouble himself to reflect upon what he had said. Wellbeloved felt "certain that he was not to be trusted," and very much doubted if "all came to all, whether he could pay twenty shillings in the pound." Uriah Irons significantly intimated to Rinkorn, the tinsmith, that, "it was not worth while to trouble themselves about what the gentleman had said, for though clever in talk he was not a child of grace, and therefore incapable of understanding such high matters." As to the opinions of the others, what matters? They were prepared to back the "parlour company" at the Flying Dutchman, for wisdom, against the world; and were therefore past learning aught.

But the stranger profited by the conversation. While he was seated at breakfast, the landlord entered, and, half-apologising, said,

"I hope, Sir, you were not put out by the rough opposition up stairs last evening?"

"Oh, no!" said he, laughing, "it saved me making a bad debt. I should have opened an account with Wellbeloved, but I saw by the manner of him, that he is not a man to figure in my books. I don't know much about religion, and don't trouble myself much about it; but I have travelled far and wide enough to learn, that those men who brag so much about their orthodoxy, and find fault with the religion of others, though having an abundance of tongue-religion possess no honesty of heart."

LIFE AND TEACHING OF ZOROASTER.

§ 6.—ZOROASTER AND THE SACRED BOOKS.

ZOROASTER had what modern men call a Mission: he was, as his followers say, to become the moral and religious instructor of mankind—the human instrument through which truth could be conveyed to the ignorant; and to this end God gave him the Sacred Books, with an injunction that he was—without fear or trembling; without believing that any power on earth could harm him—to visit the King Gushtasp, and secure his support and protection; and then, having succeeded in this mission, he should preach the truths the Sacred Books contained to the whole world. Here, then, once, and once only, as the Parsees say,—even now believe,—did God speak, face to face, with man; and there in heaven, with His own finger, did He trace out the Sacred Books for the after-perusal of all races of pious believers. There, upon the Mount Alborz, still standing, so calm and noble, in that Balk range, God spake with man—from thence He communicated His laws for human acceptance; and even to this hour demands obedience.

According to the record, He said, "Go, Zoroaster, to them to whom I send thee, and if they will not receive thee, if they will not do my bidding, then will I cut them off for ever."

Hearing these words the sage trembled, but again the voice spake, saying, "Go to Irman, that world I created pure and beautiful; that world which knew no sin when first it existed, but which the infernal serpent has spoiled and infected—that serpent which is absorbed in guilt, and pregnant with death. Do thou, who hast approached me on the holy mountain, where I have answered thy inquiries touching what is just, do thou carry my law to Irman." Zoroaster descended from the mountain, and proceeded on his way to the Court of the King Gushtasp, where, undoubtedly, whatever we may think as to how he obtained his knowledge, he certainly was a religious teacher and reformer. And the people, with unbounded faith, believed this story of the mountain—nay, they would proudly point it out, and say, "Still it stands; behold it and believe!" Nay, many of them went on painful pilgrimages to see the mountain upon which this conversation was held. Its existence was proof sufficient of the correctness of the history. And there, at its base, they knelt down, saying, "The ground is holy, the ground is holy, for God was once here."

Poor Zoroastrians! and so God talked with your leader, face to face upon that mountain? and then, having given His orders, returned to His heavenly abode? Well, it is no use debating with those men, for it has been very fairly established, that, being mentally near-sighted, they cannot see farther. Dr. Wilson has tried at Bombay to make them do so—has tried hard, as he very pathetically informs us, to persuade them how absurd it is for them to believe that Almighty God talked with a man; "I told them that no man hath seen God at any time, and so that the impostor Zoroaster could not have held converse with Him upon the lofty Alborz. But they cling to their folly, in which Satan aids them, and I can do but little for them." Yes, Dr. Wilson, you are right, You, we verily believe, can do but little for them; and, indeed, as a general rule, it has never proved at all beneficial to put two monomaniacs together when they are impressed by the same class of false ideas. They can only aid each other in getting worse, not better. Dr. Wilson says, "Poor Zoroastrians!" to which we add, "Amen. Poor Dr. Wilson!"

But these books brought forth by Zoroaster to the world, what did they contain? Many things, amongst which we find the history of Creation, which occupied twelve months. Ormuzd first created light. Or, perhaps, the orthodox Zoroastrian would rather say that Light proceeds from His glorious presence, and fills up His glorious abode, and what He did as His first act of creation was to fill the void between heaven and the chaotic earth with this existing Light, so that all the light we have is the very splendour and glory of God. "Ormuzd ordained light between heaven and earth; the fixed stars, and those which move in their courses. As it is said, He in the beginning created Heaven. The visible fixed stars were formed into groups or constellations." So that the first period was occupied in filling the void with light and creating the stars. The next act was to create the waters, with their finny, and scaly, and shell-housed inhabitants. Then the earth was moulded into form, with its lofty mountains and deep valleys. Then came the trees, bearing fruit, and all classes and tribes of vegetables, from the humblest lichen up to the massive oak and the lofty cedar. In the fifth period animals were made; all, as they tell us, clean and unclean; wild

and tame, from the mouse to the elephant; all were then made by Ormuzd. And, finally, He, the great Ormuzd, created man, to be the Lord over all Creatures. Kaiomers was the first man, and he had no companion. Thus, in six periods were all things created, but they were not equal; those of the heavens occupied 45 days; of the waters, 60; of the earth, 75; of the trees, 30; of the animals, 80; and of man, 75; making, in the whole, 365 days. The succession of events, it will be observed, follows in the order as related in Genesis, though differing in the length of time. But we should also state that, in the "Boun Dehesh," a later work, we are told that it was not one year, but 6000 years, and that creation is only to last 6000 years. A statement that Dr. Cumming, and others similarly interested in the earth's longevity, may find of some value, as 'a statement drawn from heathen writings, which singularly confirms the reasoning from our text, and which shows how true it is that, even in the lowest state, men retain traces of the truths known in Paradise.' But as yet we have not exhausted this history of creation, but only a part thereof; for, as we have already remarked above, man was alone, with no human brother or sister, and in that matter some changes were necessary.

After Ormuzd had completed his work upon earth, he was visited in his heaven by Ahriman, who went as usual with the other angels, but on surveying the earth, and what had been done, he became angry, and in the shape of a foul dragon descended to assail the work Ormuzd had made. All nature was seized with horror at his approach, in consternation the very stars shrank back, and the good guardian spirits deserted from their posts. Then began the work of ravage. Then, according to some passages in the Sacred Writings, the savage beasts were first created. Toads and other vile monsters, with sickness, and sadness, and pain, where peace and health had been, assumed the mastery, and threw all into confusion. But this evil could not be allowed to rule, so Taschter the angel of Sirius, came down and destroyed nearly all Ahriman had made. This he did by means of rain, which descended for thirty days, until all the earth was covered to the height of a man. The monsters died, but the poison in their bodies rendered the waters salt, hence the saline matters in the ocean. Ormuzd then breathed gently on the waters, and caused them to recede, and caused also that out of the spot where Kaiomers' was bedded (or as others, say directly out of his dead body) a tree to grow, and this tree was the parent of the new race, for "its fruit was ten men and women." The two first that came to perfection were Meschia and Meschiane, who, after living together as brother and sister through fifty years, became man and wife, and from these proceeded the family of mankind. To this account of creation we by no means ask assent, nor would we advise, as so many do, that it should be treated with supreme contempt as a vile forgery and not a faithful account. Because, as we know, man always bungles when he attempts such descriptions. Yet we can hardly see how it is that growing out of a tree is such a terrible idea, or that it has more of absurdity than taking the rib of a man as the foundation of woman. But could we only get the heart out of this story, methinks it would not look so very absurd. Nay, does it not mean that man is of Divine origin,—God and Nature working to one end, and that he was the first result of such combined action? But the key is lost, and now we have only the symbol, which is of no more value than a hieroglyph to one who does not comprehend the sign. It looks a maze without a plan to the uninitiated.

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXXII.

THE "UNKNOWN HEROES" OF THE REFORMATION.

"DESPISE not the day of small things," is a warning which is much needed by men in general. It has a wide and very various application. We are too apt to be dazzled by the great and marvellous; too ready to lose sight of much that is noteworthy, because it appears little or mean, and in no way remarkable. Men travel far in search of sensations, and ignore the teaching which is contained in the homely experiences of every day. Many minds stand awed and entranced in the presence of the mighty snow-capped Alps, but find no source of wonder or delight in the "living flowers of loveliest blue" which "spread garlands at their feet." Thousands of men are impressed by the great and the vast, who feel no pleasure, or, rather, are ignorant of the pleasure which may be found, in the contemplation of the minute. And yet the power and wisdom of God are really expressed as much in the revelations of the microscope as in those of the telescope. The same Infinite Power, the same Almighty Wisdom, is shown in the mechanism of the smallest insect as in the arrangement of the spheres.

Even as we find that the minute in Nature, if properly studied, is not despicable, that it is only because men turn away from the due contemplation of it that they are apt to think it but of little value, so we find in looking at Man, and Man's history, that the little, apparently insignificant, action has a worth and value unsuspected by the careless inquirer, and that the hidden workings of history, which escape the observation of most historians, are those in which lie the source and explanation of mighty results. Even as the number "One" contains all numbers, and the largest conceivable sum is but the multiplication of the "one;" even as the trickling raindrops percolate through the mighty mountain mass, and succeed in undermining and ultimately overthrowing it; even as the tiny coral insect forms the substratum of whole islands, or the little mountain stream broadens out into the mighty rolling river, so the feeble words, or the unobserved deeds, of obscure individuals have often been the beginning and the source of great historic movements. A Jewish spilmaker preaches, and Christianity is the result; Mahometanism grows out of the conversation of a Nestorian monk and an ignorant Arab youth. Some Phœnician sailors light a fire on the sand to cook their supper, and the art of Glass-making, with a large chapter in the history of Commerce, follow therefrom. Cards are made to please a fool, and the Invention of Printing, with all that has grown out of that, are after-consequences.

History, to be understood aright, must be looked at as one connected whole. The Present cannot be understood without an adequate knowledge of the Past, for of that Past it is the development and fulfilment, even as itself contains wrapped up within it the entire Future. So much is this the case that all thoughtful readers of history feel that when the data are sufficiently known and properly systematised; when, in fact, we have a science of history, even as we have a science of astronomy, then we may predict the after social developments of humanity, even as astronomers now foretell coming eclipses, and other future events resulting from the motions of the spheres. No one who believes that God's moral Universe is governed by laws as simple and certain in their operation as those of the physical creation, can doubt that. Let it be understood, however, that we do not attach the name, or give the importance of "History" to the books written by our so-called

historians, which are, in fact, histories with the "history" left out. History as written is mere patchwork; as it existed in the life of humanity it was a gradual evolution. It would seem, to look at written history, that epochs and ages stand alone, without connection either with those which preceded or those which followed, that the 15th century was uninfluenced by the 14th, and itself in no way influenced the 16th. No greater mistake could possibly be made; each age is bound by thousandfold ties to every other. No age stands alone; therefore every epoch in history must be studied as only a part of one great whole.

Even as with the Ages, so with the Men of History. It would appear as if the writers of history fancied that great men were strangers to this world, denizens of some other sphere who by some chance—lucky for humanity, but too often unlucky for themselves—had strayed upon earth. Whereas the truth is great men are results; their lifework, all that makes them great, has been rendered possible by the unremembered work of men who went before them. For instance, Stephenson is identified with our railroad system, and let him have the credit which is so justly his; but would Stephenson and his work have been a possibility if thousands of men whose names we know not, but who through the centuries have drained the marshes, made firm land of the bog, and in hundreds of other ways worked to make England what it is, had not gone before? Every great movement in history has its pioneers; every great invention its precursors and preparatory workmen; men who heralded the way either by pointing out its necessity, or who by failing in the attempt to meet the difficulties which it has conquered, narrowed the distance to be travelled in accomplishing it. There has ever been a John the Baptist before the Christ; voices in the wilderness predicting the advent of the Coming Man. Thus the great man never comes unheralded and unforetold.

It was even so with the men of the Great Reformation. Men are apt to look upon this not as a growth and development, but to stand and gaze with astonishment at the fact that Luther rose up to the accomplishment of a mighty work which no one before his time had any thought of. Indeed, so much is D'Aubigne, the "evangelical" historian of the Reformation, astonished at the wonderful nature of the work done, that he attributes it to a special interference of God in the history of the world at that particular juncture. We shall have the opportunity of examining this theory later on in our work, now we merely call attention to it. D'Aubigne does not of course deny that Huss and Wycliffe had worked before, but explains their careers in the same way—they were men specially gifted by God. We, however, who have looked at their careers, know that Wycliffe's Reform grew out of the political circumstances of his time; Huss's, also, out of the general detestation felt among his countrymen for the vice and corruption in the Church, aided by the influence of Wycliffe's writing. But beyond Huss and Wycliffe there were another class of men—the "unknown heroes" of the Reformation, who paved the way for Luther's work by gradually indoctrinating the people with the desire for Reform, and spreading abroad a feeling of dissatisfaction with the Church.

Justice to humanity demands that we should not be blind to this. It is very necessary, too, in these days, that we should remember it, when every evangelical scribbler is ready to paint the humanity of the prereformation time as capable of conniving at and revelling in the grossest vice and evil, as not being revolted at the blackest sins against God and man. This tallies so well, too, with that hideous and blasphemous Church doctrine of human

depravity that those who listen to priests are very apt to believe. But let us be just to human nature, and recognise the fact that there were good men in the darkest of the Dark Ages, men who were revolted at the vice and corruption engendered by Priestcraft and fostered by the Church; indeed, it was this feeling on the part of thousands that caused the spread of the Hussite and Wycliffite "heresies." But when the Church had succeeded in branding these Proto-Reformers and their followers with the name, and banning them with the curse, of heresy, there still remained within the Church men who saw and abhorred the priestly corruption and vice, and who, by their writings and their teachings, paved the way for the great Rebellion against the Priesthood which marked the 16th century.

Some may say, Why did not these men join the followers of Wycliffe and Huss? But let us not blame them too hastily that they did not this. Every man is not fitted to become a martyr. In those days, too, ere yet the Printing Press was invented, these men for the most part knew nought of Huss and Wycliffe, or if they heard of them, heard only that they were fearful heretics, who denied Christianity and abjured Religion. And, again, it should not be forgotten that the work these men did would never have been done by them except as obedient sons of the Church. These considerations afford a sufficient explanation and apology for them, and in drawing our readers' attention to some of their teachings, and the influence wrought by them in the age preceding the Reformation, we would be understood as wishing, in the first place, to show that the Reformation itself grew out of the action of humanity, was, in fact, an historical development, having its source and explanation (amongst other predisposing causes) in the consciousness which had gradually grown up in the minds of men that the priestly system and Church teaching which had led mankind into vice and barbarism were neither Religion nor Christianity, and in the next place as desiring to do justice to human nature, by showing that it has within it a tendency against evil, powerful even in the worst of circumstances, so that Priestcraft was never able wholly to eradicate human goodness.

Beyond these, however, there is still another lesson of practical value which is involved in the consideration of this subject, this, namely, that however insignificant and contracted our sphere of action, we may yet do somewhat towards furthering the progress of mankind. If we cannot stand out in the van, and as leaders in the battle, we may at least enrol ourselves among the "unknown heroes;" if we cannot be a Luther, we may be a John of Goch or a Jacob of Juterbock. Every man may do something. Many a giant evil, many a pernicious falsehood, many a capital error, would long ere this have been destroyed, and have disappeared from among men if those who stood doubting their own capacity to do ought to remove it had banded themselves together, or had even gone to work single-handed (though in that case the process might have been slower) against it. Evil exists because men tolerate it. Error puts on a brazen front because men hesitate to attack it.

As Religious Reformers, it is well for us ever to remember that there is an infinite value in Individual Endeavour; that the greatest movements which history records have originally existed in the earnest thoughts and words of some few earnest souls, who gave no thought to the question of their power to do, but went and did what was in their power. Let no man, then, for an instant doubt his power to aid in the great work of Religious Reform. Bethink you, too, of this, that he who is not for us—hand, heart, and soul—is against us, for by his very hesitation he makes the powers of

evil strong. The earnest word of truth once spoken, no matter who the speaker, the earnest deed once done, no matter who the doer, have a value infinite and immeasurable. Though we may not see the results of our work, depend upon it those results must come; and whether they come or not is a matter which we can afford to leave out of our calculations if we can but answer to our own consciences and to God for having done *all* that lay in our power to bring them about. Let each man who wishes well to our cause go about the work in this spirit, and it will not be long before it will be a great success. In any case his reward will be all-sufficient in the consciousness he will possess of having done his duty.

JAS. L. GOODING.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, P. M. D.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

(Continued from p. 96.)

It is quite natural for the curiosity of a reader of this narrative to be excited upon many points, all of which are important in their general bearing upon the authority of the narrative as a whole. For instance, who can avoid asking how it was possible for one man to do so much in so short a time. According to the narrative, Elijah did not begin to build his altar until the failure of the Baalites was made manifest; but when he began, the work went on at a rate which far surpassed anything achieved in our modern systems of building. The story reads as if Elijah did not begin to work until "the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice," when, seeing that Baal had not answered, he called the people to heed his words and to watch his actions. The hour for the evening sacrifice was that of sunset. But, taking advantage of a statement made by Josephus, to the effect, that at a later date it was offered at 3 P.M., Kiel states that it is the earlier hour we are to fix upon. This is an assumption which is not warranted by the facts. He suggests, also, that the Hebrew should be translated not "till the offering," but "till towards the offering," thus securing a lapse of time between that point when the failure of the Baalites was made clear, and that when Elijah sacrificed. This may be granted, but still it is impossible to believe that the whole series of recorded events occurred within any such scanty period. There was, first of all, the altar to be built. The text says, "repaired an old altar," but then goes on to speak of Elijah building one with twelve stones. Whether repairing an old or building a new altar requires stone, and no single man can move very heavy blocks of stone, in an instant. It must have been of great size. A bullock cut up and laid out according to the orthodox method covered a considerable space, and thus the mere removal of the stones must have occupied no inconsiderable portion of time. They were not miraculously moved or it would have been so stated; neither does it seem that the writer believed the prophet had any assistance in performing his building labours, so that we are compelled to desire more information before undertaking to say that the narrative is true.

There are, however, other wonders. The altar was completed, and then he dug a trench round about it, "great enough to contain two measures of seed." What size was that trench? The critics are divided, because, in truth, the original does not mean that the capacity of the trench was merely equal to the two measures, but that "the surface was equal to that upon which two measures would be sown." This would give a very large space, and that was what the original writer believed. All those who believed in the stories of giants and fairies were satisfied with the most incongruous and contradictory narratives, being under the impression that, from the beginning to the end the events were supernatural. This notion does not

suit the modern mind, but it is involved in the text, and with all its inconsistencies it cannot be ignored. But taking its capacity as being smaller, it must still be spoken of as a deep trench, dug on all the four sides of an altar large enough to lay a bullock upon, and thus not less than twenty-four square yards. This is the smallest space allowable, and then the question arises, How, if Elijah began his work of building towards the time of evening sacrifice (say at 4 p.m.), could he in two hours have done so much, both in the way of altar building and trench digging? The majority of readers never pause to ask such questions, any more than we in our boyhood time asked how the dwarfs and fairies did so much in a short time. It was the event we looked at—not the possibilities, but when older grown it was the latter which forced itself upon our attention. And so here; there is no hint of supernatural work, it is all stated as a plain matter of building and digging, and I do not hesitate to say it was utterly impossible for any man to have done the work, even in twenty-four hours, much less, then, was it possible for it to have been done in two, or, at the most, three hours.

Unhappily, however, for the credit of the narrative, other wonders and impossibilities follow. When the whole was complete Elijah ordered some of the people to bring water to pour over the altar and wood, and bullock, which they did until all were drenched. They brought four barrels; of their size we cannot speak, but to make the narrative perfect they must have been very large, for they drenched the whole. When this was completed he ordered them to do it again, and again for the third time, after which he filled, or had the trench filled with water. How many scores of gallons were required for filling the trench must be decided by those who know its actual size; enough for us to know that the mere filling the comparatively small space I have allowed would take many hours, even if water were at hand, which it was not. Where did it come from? Water upon the top of Mount Carmel was not to be obtained at any time without great labour. Some ingenious gentlemen have supplied good springs from which they suppose it to have been drawn; but let the springs be granted, and let them be ever so good, still time is an element in the matter, which cannot be dispensed with. To do the work of inundation after the altar was built would require many hours, even supposing that there were many ready hands to render assistance.

But the gentlemen who have been so liberal as to supply good springs seem to have forgotten that even they run dry after a long drought. The narrative states that for above three years there had been no rain, so that all the wells and springs had gone dry. Can we suppose those on Mount Carmel to have remained open when those upon the plains were closed? Obviously, the mountain-springs would dry up first, and thus they who have so generously imagined the springs, must complete their work by imagining some means of supply.

Driven from this, there is no use in descending two thousand feet to the River Kishon, for that also must have been equally dry, and so there is no other assumption than that, as Dr. Kitto suggests, the water was salt and brought from the sea. If so, then, as they had miles to carry it, how long were they in conveying the necessary quantity? Men cannot jump over miles of mountains down to the sea-shore to obtain salt water, and then leap back in the same hurried manner. The narrative, like all others of a similar character, does not dwell upon such small matters, but hurries on to the end, as I must do, merely protesting that while so many impossibilities are crowded together, it lies beyond our power to say that it is true. Unless the water was supplied miraculously it could not have been thus used upon the top of Carmel.

But what of the results? What of the butcheries? The writer says: "And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there."* So that they were all butchered, and by the hand of the "Man of God." All slain without mercy and without regard to justice. Can we picture to our minds this man of blood while engaged in his fearful task? To slay one man must be a fearful task, from which we all should start back

* 1 Kings, xviii. 40.

appalled, but what would be our feelings were we called upon to slay several hundreds? And why slay them, when, if the narrative were but true, they would have been glad to join in the Jehovah worship? If they had failed with their own and then had seen the success of Elijah, are we not bound to believe they would have turned to the most powerful Divinity? Men never cleave to a dethroned God. While they can believe in His power a faithful worship is possible, but once prove His inferiority and all is done. So that in this case, if the narrative of these astounding events be true, then the certainty is that there was no need to slay the men. All that that they stood in need of was a fair chance to declare themselves to be on the side of the victor and his Divinity.

They who swear by the Biblical narrative have felt themselves somewhat hampered by this stroke of slaughter, and yet they have managed to escape from it rather easily. Dr. Kitto remarks that "the appeal of Elijah was to the people. He called upon them to inflict, then and there, upon these ringleaders of the people in idolatry—the punishment which the law denounced, and such as would have been inflicted upon himself had the victory been on their side; and the king seems to have been too awe-stricken to interfere. From the character of Elijah, we have no doubt that he executed this act of blood heartily and with entire satisfaction. It is not for us to vindicate him. The only question is, Was this in accordance with the law, and with the spirit of the times? It certainly was. And Britons, not so much as fifty years ago, performed under their own laws, with perfect peace of mind, upon far less heinous offenders, the deadly executions which we now regard with horror. If, then, in looking back upon the last generation, we make allowance for this great change of law and sentiment within so short a time, we must needs make the same allowance in surveying the more remote, and less refined, age in which Elijah lived."* But I decline to make that allowance until it is conceded that we are dealing with the story of ordinary life. If God guided Elijah, then what the prophet did under such circumstances must be attributed to the Divinity. Dr Cox contends that "the slaughter of the priests of Baal which followed, at the command of Elijah, was not the indulgence of personal revenge, but an act of retributive justice for the blood of the prophets, which they had caused to be shed; and of righteous punishment for the guilt which they had incurred in seducing the Israelites from the worship of the true God; to whom also they owed allegiance as their special protector, having been by Him separated from all other nations"† Is it true that these priests had seduced the people to turn from Jehovah? Can it be said that they were ever true worshippers? And is it for any man to slay another upon matters of religion?

But after all this the king was to be won over. Rain was promised. Elijah, after the butchery returned to the top of Carmel, "and said to his servant, Go up now, look towards the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain, and Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."‡ Fancy the prophet bounding before the chariot of Ahab! A more pitiful sight cannot be conceived, unless it be Crammer flattering Henry the Eighth.

And now Ahab informed his wife, Jezebel, of what had been done. "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his

* Kitto. Daily Bible Illustrations, vol. iv. p. 244.

† Sacred History and Biography, p. 244.

‡ 1 Kings, xviii. 43-46.

"servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and "came and sat down under a juniper tree : and he requested for himself that he "might die ; and said, It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life ; for I am "not better than my fathers."* So that the selfsame man who could mercilessly slaughter with his own hand all these priests could not remain to be tried in the fire of persecution. Take the picture as painted by the author, and we must say that Elijah, too, was a man, and how often it is seen that he who is readiest to create the stake and bind the victims, and set fire to the faggot, is the first to say "hold, enough, I cannot ! I cannot !" when it comes to his own turn to be tried in the fire.

Elijah fled, and went away from his servant a full day's journey into the wilderness, where the thought, as he sat beneath the tree, arose in his mind, "Oh that I "could die ! Oh that I now could die !" The reaction had commenced, for even, according to the narrative, this man was not a murderer by profession, but kindly hearted and generous. Roused to a lofty pitch of bitter religious fanaticism, he could sieze the priests of Baal and immolate them upon the altar of God ; but when the hour of reaction came, once more the man emerged from the fanatic, and then he looked with inexpressible horror upon his work. And to what had it all led ? How had the nation been profited by the sacrifice ? He had conquered, and now in the hour of victory it is as an exile he sits beneath the juniper tree, to review the horrible past. Let us read what follows, and see what lurks beneath the curious story. He lay down and slept, and "behold an angel roused him to "eat and refresh himself for a long journey," a journey of forty days, to Mount Horeb, was before him. The journey was made. Horeb was reached, and then follows this relation. "The word of the Lord came unto him, and said, What doest "thou here, Elijah ? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of "hosts : for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine "altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left ; and "they seek my life, to take it away."† Does it not seem strange to you that such an answer should be given by one who is represented as one of the greatest of Religious heroes ? Where was the heroism of thus flying from the battle at the time his presence was most needful ? Nor was this the first time that this "prophet" had shown himself thus wanting. Very different to this has ever been the conduct of the real heroes of the Past—the men to whom, apart from foregone conclusions and priestly teachings, the suffrages of the world are most willingly given. Often has it been that the witnesses of the truth might also have said, "I only am left, and the evil ones seek my life to destroy it," but still they remained and fought the good fight, and, unlike Elijah,—priest-made hero though he be—never thought of deserting their posts because danger pressed. But the story proceeds : and the Lord said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before "the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent "the mountains, and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; but the Lord "was not in the wind ; and after the wind an earthquake ; but the Lord was not "in the earthquake."‡

(To be continued.)

* 1 Kings, xix. 1-4.

+ Ibid. 10.

‡ Ibid. 11.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.

CHAPTER XIV.

A TALK ABOUT THE CLERGY AND THE DEVIL.

SITTING at breakfast one morning, not a great while after the events recorded in the previous chapters, Lester appeared to be much depressed, and Ella had evidently descended without her usual flow of spirits and good humour. Few ladies were of a more cheerful disposition, and generally, the morning meal was enlivened by a genial conversation, in which she took no unimportant part. There was something to tell of her flowers, or feathered domestics, of which she was particularly fond, and equally curious in watching and commenting upon their habits. According to custom, Lester and Ella had been out in the grounds, she to gather a few flowers, for the breakfast-table, he to enjoy his reflections and plan the business of the day; but this morning there was moodiness—a heaviness upon their spirits, and both had failed in their objects, the flowers pleased her not, although many of them were among the finest specimens which could be produced; and his thoughts were confused and moody. A few letters lying upon the table were hastily opened and passed over without comment. Neither spoke of their contents, and it appeared as if the meal were to end in perfect silence. Had they been two lovers who had had words on the previous evening, they could not have been more politely cold, or lovingly formal to each other. This, however, was a condition of things that could only be temporary, for neither of them had any cause of alienation or coldness. Ella was the first to break through the barrier by asking—

“How is it, George, that I have such a strange distaste for talking or moving this morning? I feel as if it would be a relief for me if I could get into some dark quiet corner to shed tears; it seems as if something fearful, or especially unpleasant were about to happen. I have no ‘pricking of my thumbs’ to tell me that ‘something evil this way comes,’ and yet, at one

moment, I am in a state of indescribable apprehension ; while, in the next, I feel a sudden joy, which is equally overwhelming and inexplicable."

Lester confessed to sharing the same indefinable dread, still, without being able to account for it. It was only when rallied by his sister, who, none the less, continued "ill at ease," and pressed to endeavour an explanation of such phenomena, that he roused himself sufficiently to observe, in answer to her questions, that probably what they felt depended upon the unpleasant situation of their affairs in Crosswood, and upon the growing distaste to his ministerial efforts.

That situation was anything but enviable. With the best and purest intentions, Lester had commenced his official life with dealing in the plainest and most straightforward manner with his parishioners. He was gentle in reproof, but especially firm in maintaining his opinions. He invariably called both things and actions by their right names, and would not pretend to be what he was not. In all his sermons he avoided historical and prophetic discussions, and bluntly assumed Christianity to be a well-defined religious and moral system, having, on the one hand, a set of promises relating to the future, for the joy of all believers, which were sure to be fulfilled, and a series of duties to be performed in the present by those who would be at peace here and hereafter.

Upon one occasion, preaching before the Dean, he chose for his text the command given by Jesus to his disciples, "Swear not at all," and after exposing, in a few plain sentences, the fallacies which crowd the pages of those divines who attempt to soften down its obvious meaning, he proceeded to argue that all Christians—that all who take the name of Jesus—are bound to refuse to make oath in public courts quite as much so as in private life. After the congregation had dispersed, the Dean endeavoured to persuade him that the sermon was based upon a fallacy.

"I shall not," said he, "insult you by using the arguments commonly employed to satisfy the ignorant and vulgar crowd upon this point, for, of course, you know, that, more or less distinctly, they are sophistical. They suit the crowd and satisfy it, therefore, I do not hesitate about using them in ordinary sermons. But, of course, there can be no doubt of Jesus having meant his command to be binding upon all Christian men, none that he meant swearing in the ordinary meaning of that term. All that I freely concede, just as you stated it; but still, I would impress this upon your mind, that we must use our own discretion in regard to the times and seasons. We are not to cast pearls before swine. It is not wise at all times to preach the entire doctrines and duties of Christianity. Men would take alarm, and leave us altogether, so that it becomes our duty to give them no more than they can bear. And this is not an age in which to preach against 'public oaths,' for they constitute part of the law of the land, and, as such, we must respect them."

Lester warmly contended that either we should preach Christianity as a whole, or cease to call ourselves Christians, and that if Jesus were the Christ, then he thought it presumptuous on our parts to alter or hide up any part of his teaching.

The Dean declined to continue the discussion, but kindly intimated his admiration of Lester's genius and earnestness. "But, beware," said he, in conclusion, "lest the latter lead you into those bold courses of preaching and denunciation, through which the power of the former will be deprived of its due weight and influence upon society."

It cannot be said that Lester profited much by this well-meant advice, for he still rose, Sunday after Sunday, to preach practical sermons, in which were no apologies for splendid sin, no excuses for unchristian bitterness. Through all he said, there ran the two convictions that "Jesus had authority to teach a new religion, whose lightest precepts are binding upon us," and that "human life is no idle dream, to be frittered away in mere folly, but a stern reality, to be lived manfully and with honour." But it was impossible to hide from himself the fact, that while the poor were almost malignantly delighted by his preaching, the respectable tradesmen, the farmers, and the wealthy, were very much dissatisfied. The poor were not so, and yet they were not much improved, for, as a rule, they kept constantly on the watch for what they called the hard hits given to the rich masters, and gave little or no heed to the general bearings of the discourse. This soon became known to the wealthy churchmen, and made them treat the rector as a revolutionist in disguise, scarcely a day passed without his receiving an annoying letter, or being exposed to most unpleasant interviews, all of which operated upon his spirits, and made him feel how hard it is to be an honest man.

Ella was not satisfied with the general answer her brother had given, and suggested that she was in that state of mind in which persons are said to foretell disaster. "What," she asked, "is the difference between that and prophecy?"

"It is exceedingly difficult," he replied, "to draw a line between philosophical or practical prediction, and those utterances which have been spoken of, and are still known as prophecies. So many instances are recorded of men having foretold future events, that it would be as unwise to deny the fact, as it is on the part of others to assume them to have been directed and instructed by a supernatural Power. The latter may be supposed, but cannot be demonstrated."

"I have always felt the impossibility of proving that," interposed Ella, "and it has frequently occurred to me, as a matter worth inquiring into, how the ancient prophets could know themselves to be filled with Inspiration. Of course, I believe, as you know, that they were so, still, I cannot understand how they knew it. I have tried to tell whence came my own thoughts, how they were connected with recent events, but could not do so. And if I were inspired, I feel that it would be impossible for me to prove it, even to my own satisfaction, much less to that of others. Until I can tell the source of my ordinary thoughts, I should be unable to speak of any as supernatural. How then can this be told?"

"As I have said, Ella, that cannot be demonstrated, but there is still a greater difficulty in discriminating between feelings which are the first-born of Fear, and those strange premonitions of coming disaster which have been recorded among the remarkable anecdotes of illustrious men. When it occurs in the instances of soldiers or sailors going into battle—they predicting their own death—there is nothing really worthy of wonder; the only real cause of astonishment, lies in the fact, that so much should have been said about such premonitions, for, if it be remembered that thousands march to the field under the same conviction, who yet succeed in quitting it without even receiving a wound, the cases of those who fall will cease to appear remarkable. There are, however, other instances of premonitions in which there were no known circumstances calculated to excite them, wherein the parties have foretold that accidents were about to happen, and which came accordingly. There

is, at first sight, something surprising in this, but on reflection it is found that these may be resolved in a similar manner. As for instance, it is by no means rare for persons to feel an undefined repugnance to taking a journey, which has been previously settled upon, or to engaging in tasks in which their assistance has been promised. They feel as if some accident would befall them, and consequently are thoroughly averse to entering into the proposed business, yet, being constrained, they do it, and, as it turns out, with perfect safety. The dread of evil proved to be imaginary, and, much to the disgust of the Spiritualist, no farther notice was taken of it. The medical philosopher explains the phenomenon by referring it to some derangement of the liver and its secretions, and concludes that a larger amount of biliary matter was present in the blood to operate upon the brain. This explanation shocks the sensibilities of many who pretend to philosophical acumen, quite as much as poets are shocked when the hesitation and changing moods of Hamlet are referred to dyspepsia. Still there is a measure of truth in the suggestion which no wise man will venture upon repudiating. But it does not follow that there are no cases which cannot be thus accounted for. It appears perfectly clear that there are instances in which 'coming events cast their shadows before,' in which the soul seems capable of prefiguring for itself the fact, but not the nature of the storm which is about to burst, or wherein it seems to have a perfect knowledge of the fact that something pleasant is about to occur. But," he added, "I must not remain here idling away the time, discussing incomprehensible subjects, especially while there are so many sick to be visited, and so much parish business to attend to." He hurried away, and the dullness soon passed from his spirits. Returning about five to dinner, he was startled by Jane in the hall crying out—

"Oh, Sir, dear Master George, who do you think is in the parlour with Miss Ella? Not Miss Mary! No! You can't guess, but its Doctor Moule. He has come, and is going to stay all night."

The latter piece of information was lost upon Lester, for no sooner had he heard who was with his sister than he bounded off to join them, and within a minute a manly gripe of the hand told the two friends how glad they were to meet.

"Yes," said the Doctor, "I knew I should be welcome, and I had no time to write. An old patient of mine, who is staying about eight miles from here, would have me sent for. She was not satisfied with the country doctor, and said he did not understand her complaint. Probably he did not, for all she suffers from is the having too much money, too little to do, and an inordinate appetite. I can manage her well enough, so I was obliged to come, and being so near, how could I return without calling?"

"I would never have forgiven you," said Ella, "but now prepare for dinner and a long chat. I quite envy you the luxury in store."

Preparations were soon made; dinner was soon despatched, and then, as Ella had predicted, an interesting conversation followed.

At one point the Doctor suddenly asked, "And what would you say if I were coming to live with you?"

"Nothing that the blind goddess could turn up upon her wheel would give us greater pleasure than to know that Doctor Moule was coming to reside at Crosswood. I speak for Ella and Mary—who will soon be here—as well as myself. And, Doctor, if the Rectory is not large enough I'll build a new wing, to make room for you."

"Better let it alone, for I should be a perpetual bore to Ella. No, it will

not answer just now; but when I have the gout, or am scant of breath, and need a deal of nursing, then I'll come. And, indeed, George," he gravely continued, "it is hard to tell who is to nurse me, now the two queens are away."

"Let us strike a bargain: and do you agree to join us before the gout comes, to prevent travelling."

"No, it will not do. In fact, at present the district is too healthy, much too healthy for me. Not that I care a pin about the fees, but I must have something to do. I could no more live without patients than a terrier could thrive without vermin."

"You are as difficult to trip up as an eel is to hold; but, Doctor, I have you upon the hip there. You mean to say, that unless somebody else is sick you cannot be content. Is not that a strange confession for a philosopher?"

"It may sound so, yet it is true; and I am no exception to the general rule, except, perhaps, in speaking the truth about it. All professions thrive by evils. Judges, Lawyers, and Gaol Governors prosper through the existence of knaves; and the glorious profession of arms would be unknown, were it not for despotism and selfishness. And the Clergy are in the same predicament. No offence to the Cloth; but were it not for the Father of Lies, clerical toast would be but poorly buttered; in fact, the clergy would have no bread to toast."

"Well, if we are dependants upon his bounty, at least we are his sworn enemies—always in arms against him!"

"Yes, in theory they are, and it's a pretty theory, too; but they don't want him to be poisoned out of the way. For instance, you have begun to teach men to hate the devil, and, according to the too popular notion, all the clergy would be delighted to hear of his destruction."

"So they would be! and although the world is distracted with religious divisions, all sects would agree about the advantage of getting him put decently out of the way. I'm not sure of their caring two straws about its being 'decently' done, so long as it were done."

Doctor Moule shook his head incredulously, being under the impression, that when Lester knew more of the clergy his opinions would be greatly changed. According to his ideas, they would denounce the devil living, but would equally denounce any who would undertake to put him out of existence. As was his good fortune when speaking, he had an illustration ready.

"Your father used to tell the story of a Captain Maclean, who was powerful as an orator in denouncing 'war as a very horrible, savage, and altogether ignoble plan of settling disputes;' but when any one proposed that peace should be proclaimed and preserved, he was equally eloquent in urging, that such a plan was ridiculous, 'because, without war, there would be nothing for the soldiers to do.' Now, that is much the same as the conduct of the clergy. If any man could kill the devil, and went forth upon the highway intending to do it, they would stop him."

"Dollond would be thrown into a fever to hear you talk thus, and I feel quite uncomfortable."

"Yes, because, although he is very learned, he never looks at things with a practical eye. The fact is, that this is a land of vested interests, and we are so conservative, that not even the devil could be killed without calling forth the bitterness of those who have a vested interest in his life. Every profession must live. Sickness finds me plenty to do, and the devil makes work for gentlemen of your cloth. Yet why do you look so uncomfortable, George?"

"Because I think there is irreverence in your language. Such subjects should be treated in another manner."

"That is what the Mussulmen said to me when I was in Turkey. They protested that, unless I spoke of the Koran and its commentaries with profound respect, they could not converse with me about them, because they were as uncomfortable. But I am treating the subject truthfully, and there cannot be irreverence in that. Truth is unpleasant at times, and even to hint it makes men uncomfortable. Only yesterday, while I was in the news-room, the Reverend Ebenezer Hermon was talking about the pains his obedience to his call would cause him. It seems that he is leaving Brown Willows for a much richer living in Yorkshire, and I asked him why he obeyed it. The start he gave was truly melo-dramatic; and when he asked if I thought he would dare to disobey God, there was an air of proudly-arrogant humility about him which raised the devil in me. I pressed him to tell how he knew the call was from God, but instead of doing so, he merely said he had thought that I was a religious man. Seeing that no answer was forthcoming, I asked how it happened, that when a small but rich congregation called a man from a larger but poorer flock, the call was generally obeyed; but scarcely ever did that follow when the call was from a congregation that paid three hundred a-year less than he was then receiving. Of course he could only grin his apeish reply; and we all know that when a man gets what he considers a call, he never answers until he is satisfied about the stipend; and, consequently, it is a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. He knew this as well as I did; and so did they who were in the library, but then it is an unpleasant truth, and many like to have it shelved. Best for all parties to speak it out; for instance, you are come to Crosswood, simply because your good fortune has given you its rectory with £600 a-year. Now, deal honestly with yourself, admit the fact within your own mind, and you'll be all the better for it."

"But surely, Doctor, you cannot mean it to be inferred that the clergy, as a body, would be guilty of defending the devil? You are not to be numbered with their enemies, who esteem them as guilty of many crimes, as well as capable of much weakness."

"I don't know about the guilt of it, neither do I trouble to examine their enemies, but that which you say I cannot mean, is precisely what I do mean. If the devil were in any immediate danger of losing his life, he would make no mistake about finding a safe sanctuary in the churches. I'll warrant that whoever advanced forward to slay him, would be valiantly driven back by the reverend warriors of the Cross."

"At any rate, they would not argue as the captain did, that a known evil must be preserved because of their depending upon it for bread."

"No! if you mean that they would not openly argue as the captain did, then you are quite right. Still, in the result, there is no difference, and it is their unuttered meaning. They are learned, and quite competent to turn the corner of a grave difficulty without leaving any raw edges open to offend against good taste."

"I don't see the way in which they could do it, for every clergyman holds himself to be bound to fight against the Evil One, and that involves the idea of destroying him."

"You are, as yet, but a young hand, George. Your seniors would argue that, 'Since his creation, Satan has proved himself to be the father of discord, hatred, and evil, a very liar from the beginning; still, it having pleased

Jehovah to create him, it could not be for mortal men to destroy, their duty being no other than that of guarding against him, so as to avoid all his works.' And this would be closed up with the pious reflection that, 'All such mighty changes must be left in the hands of God, who, in His own good time, will work them.' Thus, as for blotting Satan out of existence the clergy would denounce it as an unparalleled piece of presumption."

"You must draw a line between two parties, for it is certain that many among them would risk the results if they could but choke the devil, at whatever cost. I would make one upon that side."

"Spoken like the son of Colonel Lester! Yes, George, I believe you would, and that there are many of your school to lend the helping hand I'll not doubt, still there is the majority to go the other road. They must just keep him alive or they would perish. Why, man, if it were not through fear of the devil nine-tenths of our churches would be empty every Sunday. The great body of those who attend do so, not because of loving the service, or desiring to hear the sermon, but simply because they are alarmed lest Old Nick should acquire some right to possess them if they were to stay away. The preachers are as well aware of this as any laymen can be, and it is through that they see him to be the main source of their emoluments. Kill the devil, and you leave the clergy without a friend. As it is the majority of even pious persons like a hit at the parson. It is their fear of the devil which keeps them in order. In short, depend upon it, George, if the devil were dead, the clergy would follow as chief mourners at his funeral, and although he left them no legacy of love, there would be no need of onions, for the big tears would flow fast and freely."

"I do not like your line of argument, Doctor, although, probably, there is truth in it, still you are unusually severe."

"And it's time to be so, for with the mad world holding its unread Bible, which it swears by, in one hand, and its cash book—which it does read—in the other, there is ample cause for severity."

"At all events, the clergy are not responsible for that. They deplore the Mammon worship you are hinting at, quite as much as yourself."

"Yes, they curse the God, but bow before his altar. They denounce the sin of getting, but when a golden lectureship is to be won, it is astonishing how many of them start in the race. I belong to the old school, and judge by the results. It was a grand saying that, 'By their fruits shall ye know them.'"

"Aye, Doctor, it was. And I am very much afraid that if other classes of Christians, besides the clergy, were tried by the same rule—"

"Yes! Yes!" interrupted the Doctor, "I know what you are about to say, but does not the evil arise in great part from so many of the clergy setting so bad an example?"

"Well, well, Doctor! we will leave the clergy alone now. But that there is evil I admit. Indeed, I am much more ready to admit it than I should have been some months since. My experiences here have already taught me many sorrowful lessons. And, Doctor, I heartily wish you would fulfil your half-formed intention of coming to live here, for I should then have somebody to sympathise with, and with whom I could sympathise."

"Well, my boy, I saw Barrington yesterday. He has just come home, and has taken a place not far from here, and so you will soon have some one to sympathise with. Now, let's have a stroll, and take a look at your parish."

FEMALE LIFE IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN TIMES.

IN most states of society, female life and character are sure indications of the domestic condition of a people. It was so with respect to Constantinople in the fourth century. The city was essentially Greek, and exhibited Grecian influence in everything; yet the depreciation of females, said to have prevailed in the Historical age of Greece, was not transmitted to this great descendant of the Grecian race; in fact, not being properly an European principle, it never took root among the Romans; it could not coexist with Christianity, and the influences of Christianity and of Rome were amalgamated in this new compound of Grecian civilization. Accordingly women have found a conspicuous place in the literature of the time. Our readers shall judge how far the portraiture is satisfactory; but we must premise that, while our chief informant, St. Chrysostom, cannot surely be false, much of humble excellence might have escaped an eye that was ever scrutinizing the follies of the great, while his own pages show that there were individuals within his personal acquaintance who deserved even his highest commendation.

The personal charms of the ladies are described far more copiously than their mental gifts; indeed the latter seem to have been in general overlaid by the care bestowed on their outward adornment. Our readers will recollect how decidedly Aristotle tells us that size is one of the virtues of a woman, but this was not less a virtue in the times of which we are treating, and Gregory Nazianzen forcibly rebukes a kinsman who depreciated his wife only because she was too small. This important particular being assumed, more specific claims were requisite for admission among the *belles* of the metropolis. The eyes must be full, dark, liquid and rolling; the nose straight, and exquisitely chiselled, with nostrils perfectly proportioned; the teeth of beautiful arrangement. Thus much was required from Nature; Art, too, was called upon. Painting the face, and dying the eyes with stibium, were appliances that few women could resist. It required the utmost tact to induce one's wife to relinquish them. "Should she be so addicted," says Chrysostom, "do not terrify her, do not threaten her; be persuasive and insinuating. Talk at her by reflecting on neighbours who do the same, tell her she appears less lovely when thus tampered with. Ask her if she wishes to look young, and assure her this is the quickest way to look old. Then, finally, come down upon her with the warnings of Scripture. You may speak once and again, and she is invincible, but never desist; be always amiable and bland, but still persevere. It is worth putting every engine into motion; if you succeed, you will no more see lips stained with vermilion, a mouth like that of a bear reeking with gore, nor eyebrows blackened as from a sooty kettle, nor cheeks plastered like whited sepulchres." Such is the Saint's exhortation. It shows that the dames of the eastern empire could, at least, make their independence recognized, and affords a striking contrast to the degraded state of their successors in modern times. It is curious, too, to remark how, under every change of circumstance, the fashion of painting the eyes has prevailed in these regions; and, indeed, with habits in many respects so dissimilar, their delicacy and pampered imbecility would have rendered them fit inhabitants of a harem. Their early training was deplorably defective. Till the period of a very premature marriage, they lived in the deepest seclusion, and we scarcely discern a vestige of mental education. "Whence comes it," says Chrysostom, "that the sex is so effeminate, but from their method of rearing? it is the result of their seclusion, their idleness, their baths, their

"unguents, the infinity of their perfumers, and their downy couches." A watch was set upon their chambers, the approach even of relations was almost forbidden. It is to be supposed that in childhood they rarely attended the worship of the Church, by boys, we know, it was commonly neglected. But no precautions could avail to prevent the bride from catching distant glances at her intended partner; occasionally, from some lofty window, she peered after the unknown master of her happiness. This, however, was a felicity of which he seldom partook; the courtship was conducted on his behalf; he was too much intent upon the hippodrome to give himself to such business-like transactions. The affair was in the hands of his father and mother—and innumerable matchmakers. The contract was properly made in the presence of ten witnesses; and by a singular provision, if a wife brought a large dowry, the husband was expected to meet it with a certain amount, which, in the event of her early death, might be claimed by her relations,—a plausible method of preventing mercenary marriages, as many would fear to make shipwreck of their all on so uncertain a contingency.

The religious ceremony was performed a day before the civil contract. A bishop or priest joined the hands of the parties and pronounced a blessing; but at home, not in the presence of the Church. Unquestionably the proceedings of the following day could not have harmonized with any ecclesiastical rite. Our readers need only call to mind the nuptial festivities of Pagan Greece, and they have a picture of those of Christian Constantinople. The seclusion of the bride for her whole previous life was frustrated in an hour. She came forth from her father's door in all the disfigurements of paint; and she, who had scarcely known that a world existed, was first received into it by hosts of drunken and lascivious men—refuse slaves, vagabonds, prostitutes. But, in truth, what she had gained was more than sufficient to compensate for the borrowed splendour which she lost. She had passed from the imprisoned seclusion of her youth to a freedom out of doors, and an authority at home, such as modern high life could scarcely excel.

Woman's most becoming position was when she appeared in all the dignity of the housewife, with her maids in silence spinning at her side; but this is an exhibition of rare occurrence; far more frequently she is in tumult indoors or fashionable dissipation abroad. In one of her troubles she shared abundantly with modern mistresses; her servants were an everlasting grievance; and in the fourth century, the troops of them retained by the wealthy inhabitants of Constantinople seem to us almost incredible. It was natural that an inexperienced bride should be charmed by the multitude of her maidens, but she little knew what it entailed. As they were property, their bodily ailments were matter of ceaseless solicitude; but this would have been tolerable, and even things worse than this—the daily vexation in watching over the idle, controlling the mischievous, appeasing the quarrelsome, and correcting countless misdemeanours. Something still graver remains, and in such a swarm it was sure to occur; at least one would be beautiful. The husband might be truly faithful, but who could brook such a collision? here was the embarrassment of wealth; she must have multitudes of attendants, and it redounded to her fame that they should be handsome. In such a case it is not difficult to foresee the lengths to which unrestrained power and petulance might prompt her. Hear Chrysostom commenting on Ephesians, chap. iv. v. 31, "Let all clamour be put away." "Above all things," says he, "let women hear this, for it treats of their habitual practice. When they are exasperated with their damsels the

"whole house re-echoes to the cry, and should the house adjoin the street, every passenger overhears the screaming mistress and the shrieking maid: 'What can be the matter?' bursts from every mouth. 'It is Mrs. So and So beating her maid.' What," continues the preacher, "may she not beat her? I say not that, for she ought; but not continually, nor immoderately, nor for household trifles, nor for negligent service merely. But if she injures her own soul, then all men will approve, and not condemn, the beating. Yes, if she will not improve, correct her with a rod and blows. And what am I to do if she paints? Forbid it. What, if she is given to drinking, talking, and scandal? Why how many ladies are the same! But many a mistress is so savage as to scourge till one whole day cannot efface the stripes, and when the unhappy woman next appears in the bath, all this cruelty is disclosed. Now she is threatened with the dungeon, now assailed with ten thousand oaths and maledictions; first she is a witch, and then a streetwalker, and next a —; for, in her foaming passion, a mistress withholds no insults. She strips her, and binds her to the bed-post, summons her children to the spectacle, and bids her dotard spouse act the part of the executioner. Ought these things to happen in the house of Christians? Why," he concludes, "why are you all blushing; or rather, not all, but such as feel it applicable to themselves?" We fear that this picture is not much overcoloured; the law had interposed to control the unlimited power of life and death, which masters could formerly exercise, but it had done nothing to repress such scenes as these. Constantine had published two edicts on the treatment of slaves; the first specifies the instrument of punishment which may be used with impunity by the master, even though to death—namely rods and thongs; the second provides more explicitly for this event, and declares that the death of the slave is not to be attributable to unjustifiable usage when inflicted by these means, because the master must be supposed to intend his reformation.

C. J. R.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXXIII.

JOHN OF GOCH.

BORN about the beginning of the fifteenth century, in the little town of Goch (then in the Duchy of Cleves, but now within the Rhine province of Prussia), John Pupper, who, according to the common usage of his age, was known as "John of Goch"—being so named from the place of his birth—may stand as our first example of the "unknown heroes" of the Reformation. Little is known of his outward life beyond the fact, that he lived and died a monk. In his writings, however, we find his intellectual history; and they are remarkable as showing how much of truth it was possible even for a monkish recluse of the fifteenth century to perceive. It is necessary to mention, in order to understand the sphere of this man's influence, that he was a preacher as well as a monk, and that Mechlin in Brabant, and Sluys in Flanders, appear to have been the chief scenes of his preaching. With no active hostility to the Church; on the contrary, with a belief in the possibility of the Church and Priesthood becoming great moral agencies and valuable aids to the religious enlightenment of the people, we find him quite content with his position as a Churchman; but, at the same time, not the less keenly alive to the distorted Christianity actually found in the Church of his time, and to the necessity of restoring it to what he conceived to be its native beauty. He was, in fact (so to speak), a latent Reformer; a man who deplored the evil around him, and saw much of truth which the Church taught not. Nay,

more, he hesitated not to speak his thoughts, but he did not apply them, was not a logical man, so far as the connection between his inner perceptions and his outward action was concerned.

Are there not many like him? Indeed, there are thousands to be found in the Churches of the present day, men who see far beyond the priestly systems they continue to support; men who listen contentedly to the Reverend Obadiah Blindmole expatiating on the Mosaic Cosmogony, and yet hesitate not to accept the entire science of Geology, and to teach it to other men. Human Nature is illogical in such cases; and it is well it is so, otherwise every Calvinist would be a misanthrope, if not a criminal, and every "orthodox Christian" would ignore reason and scientific truth. Place men within the fetters of a false system, let logic lead to folly and to sin, and human Nature will burst the fetters, even though it may not acknowledge the fact to itself. In short, in spite of all that priests and theologians say, there is enough of goodness in men to cause them to play the sophist in behalf of truth and duty. It is honourable to human Nature that it cannot avoid being better than the creeds it professes. The blame of compelling it thus to stultify itself lies at the door of Priestcraft, which creates the discrepancy between what it teaches as religion and the perceptions of man's reason. Alas! its blame ends not here; it stultifies some, but makes others criminal.

The principle on which the whole of Goch's teaching was based, was Love. 'God is love, and is thereby the source of all good. From His creative power human love emanates, which is the productive cause of all good. Man is, therefore, the created Love, which, having emanated from God the everlasting and creative Love, will through love raise himself to God again.' Divested of its theological form, this is the idea of Goch; in it we see but a resuscitation of the teaching of Christ, the Eternal Truth whereon Christianity is based, and which is the gift, which, as a Religion, it made to humanity. The position of Goch may, therefore, be defined as that of a Christian within the Church of Priestcraft. Priestcraft had buried Christianity beneath the hierarchical system and a load of theological rubbish. Men did not ask regarding the earliest Christians, "What do they believe?" for their lives were the witness of their faith; but they said of them, "See how these Christians love one another!" All this became changed with the triumph of Priestcraft. The law of love—which is the law of Christianity as taught by Christ—is liberty, but the Church had superseded this law, had denied liberty in all its forms, and so destroyed love.

We find that the distinguishing characteristics of the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century were their frequent appeals to Christian antiquity, and their constant repetition of the statement, that their object was to restore the early Church. In Goch's appeal from the dead principles of theology to the living principle of the early Church we see the same tendency as that which marked the Reformation. Alas! for us that the Reformation itself failed in restoring liberty and love; the Church of the Reformation has been as much "cabinéd, cribbed, confined," as was the Roman Church, and love is not so much its characteristic as it is of the unreformed communion. In fact, the more we look at it, the more thoroughly we examine it, we shall find that the great boon secured by the Reformation was not so much a religious progress as intellectual freedom within a certain limit. The religious Reformation, as well as the complete assertion of liberty of thought, are things of the Future. The truth perceived by Goch, and acted on by the early Christians, was never more than an intellectuality with any of the Reformers; although, doubtless,

in that shape it moulded their principles and governed their actions. Goch is remarkable in this respect, too, that his reforming tendency was evinced in an attack on the spirit of the entire Church system, into the evils connected with which he saw as deeply as either Wycliffe or Huss. Their greater importance arises from their activity, and their outspoken defiance of the authority of the Priesthood. They worked, he only thought and wrote. It must be allowed, however, that, while they boldly stormed the enemy's works, he did somewhat towards secretly undermining the citadel. The Church, for instance, based itself on authority, but what says Goch? "What a man says or writes is authentic, not because he who says it is great or honourable, but because what he says is true. For it is *Truth* alone which everywhere evinces its efficacy and invincible force, and gives authority to all speakers." Get this principle practically to influence men, and on what could the Church of Priestcraft base itself? We find this man, also, asserting the principle of religious liberty by insisting on his right to oppose and refute the Church Fathers with sounder arguments than those they used, "this," he says, "may not be agreeable to all, still no one ought to treat with contempt what is done from a love of truth." He acknowledges, too, in many of his writings, the fallibility of the Church. In all this we perceive that, by his teachings, he flatly contradicted the mediæval principle of the Divine authority of the Church, and paved the way for the teaching of Luther.

It was the repetition of such truths, by John of Goch and others, which educated people into thinking differently than the Church had taught them, and, even within the body of the congregations, familiarised men's minds with reform principles. Knowing that this work was going on for a full century before Luther's time, we need no longer resort to the hypotheses of miracles and special providences to account for the rapidity of his success, or the extent of his work. The mine, in fact, was laid, and he applied the match. True, the courage which dared to do this was all his own, and in that lies the main source of his greatness. Christianity, said Goch, was the religion of liberty, and, if the Church is to be the manifestation of Christianity, then the same principle which reigns in Christianity must, also, reign in the Church. Luther said no more; but Goch lived too early, and wanted the energy and courage to become an active Reformer.

The great work of Goch, entitled *A Treatise of the Four Errors*, was that in which he attacked what appeared to him to be the religious aberrations of his age, and in it we are enabled to trace the deep feeling of a need for Reform which possessed him, as also the extent to which he foreshadowed the work accomplished in the after time. It is composed in the lively form of a dialogue, and the conversation is carried on between the Spirit, as the higher power which instructs; and the Soul, as the inferior, which receives the instruction. At the commencement of the dialogue, the Soul observes that she was evidently intended by the Creator for something great, and she therefore seeks instruction of the Spirit, in order to learn by what means she may, with the greatest degree of certainty, reach her exalted destination. To which the Spirit replies that the Soul is, doubtless, destined for the highest possible good, that it is proper the Soul should aspire with all zeal, after this; but, in order to attain this, the thing above all else indispensably necessary is the light of discretion—in other words, the Soul must be guided in her aspirations by Reason: the result is, that the Soul and Spirit undertake to examine into the kind of errors which disturb the peace of Christians, and stand in the way of religious advance.

The four errors pointed out by Goch were characterized by him as being (1.) Unevangelical legality; (2.) Lawless liberty; (3.) False confidence in Self; and (4.) Self-devised, outward, Piety. Goch does not content himself with merely exposing the errors, but, in every case, confronts them with what he believes to be the truth. Under these various heads this strange monk attacked the various systems supported by the Church; the Scholasticism which reduced religion to logical formulæ; the doctrine of Indulgences; the imputed righteousness of the Saints, and, strangest of all, the Monasticism which looked upon mere selfish exclusion from the world as the way of salvation. Pantheism, Fanaticism, and Antinomianism were all denounced by him as resulting from "lawless liberty." To legality he opposed "evangelical freedom," to confidence in self "a deep sense of the need of grace," and to a Christianity of forms and ceremonies, its primitive and inward spirit of freedom. We thus have, in this work, a means of ascertaining what the prevalent corruptions of Christianity were in that age, as seen by a man of a really religious spirit, and desirous of a Reform in the Church teaching.*

On the other hand, however, Goch's treatise affords us an opportunity of showing, that on the side of doctrine, the Reform foreshadowed by him and others, and carried out by the Reformers of the succeeding century, was imperfect and full of errors, leading in the Church of the Reformation to manifestations equally deplorable with those found in the old Catholicism. What is this "evangelical freedom"? what this "deep sense of the need of grace," which Goch enforced, and the Reformers after him taught, as their new Evangel to the World? This "evangelical freedom," rightly looked at, was no freedom at all. It was the right to denounce the Pope at Rome as Antichrist, and to call him many hard names, but it was also the establishing of another Pope in his place. It was freedom to discard the teachings of the Old Church, but only to don the fetters of a new one. Let us never forget—while doing all honour to the Reformers for what they did—that they were unfaithful to the great principle of Christian liberty, by virtue whereof they excused their own deeds. Not that we would blame them for this; nay, we readily admit that, in the age in which they worked, they could not see all the way to perfect liberty; but, what we wish, is, that men should remember this, and not look upon that as final and perfect which was not so.

In the other principle, "the deep sense of the need of grace," which was opposed to "confidence in self," we see one of the doctrines which have perpetuated Priestcraft in Protestantism. It has degraded man into the slave of a system, and made religion a machine for divesting him of the noble self-reliance which is the only guarantee of his doing worthy work in the world. This hideous dogma of the Protestant Churches, bases itself upon human depravity, and human weakness; it degrades man by teaching that of himself he can do nothing, that all his works are "filthy rags," and "of no account in the sight of God." As Religious Reformers, we would teach a different doctrine; we would have men know that the Great Father above looks with joy upon the good works man does—that we are not Children of the Devil, incapable of good, but Sons of God, and bound to respect ourselves as such—that not in any "deep sense of the need of grace," but in earnest battling for good against evil, a belief in our own power to do this, and a faith in human goodness, shall salvation become possible for us, and ourselves become helpful to our suffering sinning fellow men.

JAS. L. GOODING.

* See Ullmann. *Reformers before the Reformation*; pp. 84-86.

THE NATURE OF A MIRACLE.

FROM A LECTURE.*

SEEMING that all religions, both those of modern and of ancient date, have been associated with supernatural occurrences, it is of no slight importance to learn precisely what it is that constitutes a miracle; and, judging from the freedom with which the subject has been spoken of, it would naturally appear there can be no difficulty in obtaining a clear definition, and a distinct description of its nature. Scarcely an European is to be met with in any ten thousand who doubts his having a perfect knowledge of what is meant by "miraculous operation;" but when challenged to sit down for the purpose of writing a description, he discovers the existence of difficulties which had not hitherto been suspected, and finds that he has much to learn before beginning to teach. And this is not the case with one or two merely, but with all intelligent men of modern times.

No such difficulty, however, was experienced by our ancestors. They were as ready to define a miracle as they were to explain any natural phenomena, and would have felt themselves insulted by being informed there was any difficulty in the task. Why this difference exists is easily shown. The modern man, through the aid of science, has become acquainted with the fact that the physical operations in the Universe are conducted in accordance with definite laws, all of which appear to be unchangeable. Formerly the conviction had possession of the human mind that the every-day occurrences depended upon no definite order or plan, but were the results of special action on the part of a Superior Power. They who denied the existence of any such Power, attributed all those changes and occurrences to Chance, or Fate, but all agreed that, as far as storms, earthquakes, and comets were concerned, they came in accordance with the operation of recent or immediate, not remote or indirect, causes. Thus, what were called "miracles," were only superior forms of the same kind of action. They were out of the ordinary sphere of events, but not so with the sphere of causation. The raising a dead man was only another form of giving life to the conceived. Such a thing was known to be unusual, but was understood as being not in any sense beyond probability. Such things did not daily occur, yet their occurrence was not marvelled at so much, because as men believed that all events, great and small, the fall of a sparrow, the sinking a ship or gaining a battle, were the results of a Special Action, there was no reason for questioning the authorship.

But the modern philosopher cannot believe in miracles; he makes acquaintance with many events whose causes lie beyond his ken; yet, being convinced that not chance but definite law rules in the Universe, he concludes them to be perfectly natural, and seeks to discover their definite causes. Thus we live in an age from which the theory of Chance has been excluded. If a plague smite our cities, we cast about to discover the cause in some imperfect drainage, or some other equally cognisable influence, known to be equal to the production of such a result. If a storm sweep our seas, we never dream of attributing it to the special operation of God, as directed against the mariners on board the ships, but explain it in accordance with the known laws of atmospheric phenomena, and proceed to apply our knowledge so as to save our ships.

In former times, when a ship went down at sea, it was believed by all who heard of the disaster, that God was its author—that through His special interference the ruin had been wrought; but now we proceed to inquire into the actual seaworthy condition of the ship, and if it can be shown to have been improperly supplied, the owners are called upon to pay damages to the relatives of those who are lost. Had it been proposed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth to compel a shipowner to pay damages for the loss of life at sea, it would have been treated as an atheistic suggestion, which every man would have felt himself bound to repudiate; the people could not draw a line, so as to separate natural from super-

* "Elijah" is unavoidably postponed. The Editor's library is travelling down to Newman Street, and the MSS. have been mislaid. They who have had to "fit" with a large library will need no farther apology; they who have not, may grumble at the neglect, but we defy them to grumble more than we have done over the same fact.—EDITOR.

natural action, consequently, whatever could not easily be explained, was set down to God as resulting from His Special Action. Thus they were in no difficulty when called upon to describe a miracle. It is true that those miracles whose history is preserved in the Scriptures were viewed as being superior to other forms of miraculous action. Yet the difference was one of degree rather than of kind—they said that the special operation of Divine Power was manifested in a thousand ways, but in these only a little more distinctly. The Church miracles were credited, but only as miracles of the lower class; yet it is difficult to draw the line between the higher and lower forms of Divine Action; for independently of the fact that both forms are equally beyond our ken, each must prove as much as the other does.

Since the time when, through the progress of astronomy, the world was enlarged to the human apprehension, and men have been able to take a more comprehensive view of how it is governed, the idea of prevailing law has obtained, and now, when speaking of a miracle, we have to say that it differs in kind from the ordinary mode of God's government. It is no longer possible to speak of a strange manifestation; but, we must say it is another mode. Thus, as conceived in modern minds, a miracle is the effect of unusual Divine Action—a result achieved through the extraordinary operation of the First Great Cause, who, by a distinct volition, achieves an end which could not be attained through any course of natural action. The miracle supposes the immediate presence of God, and its friends argue that "without Him it could not be achieved." But as all our researches have contributed to establish that God does not interfere—certainly, not in the manner formerly proposed—various attempts have been made so to explain the Scripture miracles that they shall be brought into harmony with our knowledge, and it is almost needless to say that such attempts have signally failed.

Among the number of eminent modern divines who have directed their attention to this subject, stands the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Whateley, who says of their nature: "Superhuman would perhaps be a better word than supernatural; 'for if we believe that 'Nature' is merely another word used to signify that state 'of things and course of events which God has appointed, nothing that occurs can 'be strictly called 'supernatural.' Jesus, himself, accordingly describes his 'works not as violations of the laws of Nature, but as works which none other 'man did.'*" The author, when he wrote this passage, evidently had Spinoza's objection in his mind. That writer argued that a miracle was impossible, "because 'it would make God contradict Himself," and the archbishop merely endeavours to avoid the point of that argument by supposing the existence of some higher laws which make provision for such events as appear unto us to be miraculous. Thus the miracle is not a breach of the natural law, but only of that law as we imperfectly conceive it—as the laws of the Universe are known to higher beings, there is no such violation. If this conclusion be accepted, it will follow that there is no miracle at all—there is nothing more than natural action misconceived.

The present Dean of Westminster maintains this view. He argues at great length, not only that there are higher laws of the Universe than those with which we are acquainted, but also that it is in conformity with those laws miracles are performed. To illustrate this, he unwisely invites attention to comets, and remarks "that they are miracles in relation to our solar system; that is, the comet does not 'own the laws of our system, neither do those laws explain it. Yet is there a 'higher and wider law of the heavens, whether fully discovered or not, in which 'its motions are included as surely as those of the planets which stand in immediate relation to our sun."† It is doubtful if the author have not allowed himself to be deceived by the vulgar theory of comets, for it is by no means certain that they act in a manner at variance with our solar system. It yet remains to be proved that they are the vagrants of space, for, in truth, all which we at present know is strongly in favour of the idea that they are bound by the fetters of gravitation, precisely the same as our own earth is bound.

Both Whately and Trench seem to be indebted to Olshausen, the German com-

* Whateley's *Easy Lessons on Evidences*, chap. v., sec. 2.

† Notes on Miracles, &c. Introduction!

mentator, for their view of the subject. He says that "phenomena which are not explicable from the known or unknown laws of the development of the earthly life ought not for that reason to be looked upon as violations of law and suspensions of the laws of nature; rather, they are themselves comprehended under a higher general law, for what is divine is truly according to law. That which is not divine is against nature; the real miracle is natural, but in a higher sense."*

When so many able men have proposed this scheme of harmonising scientific truth with miraculous narratives, it may seem ungracious to reject it; yet such rejection is imperatively demanded. For they only save the character of the records through destroying the nature of a miracle. If the wonders be not results of action which transcend law, then they are not miracles, but only natural phenomena, called miraculous by us, because we are ignorant of their true causes. For instance, if some natives of Africa were brought to England much could be shown them which they would deem to be miraculous. The action of our telegraphs would be to them as truly miraculous as the healing of sick men by means of the royal touch was to many of our ancestors. To us, however, there would be no miracle in the matter, and simply because of our being acquainted with higher laws of electrical forces than any the Africans have conceived. Directly the wonder is brought within the compass of law it ceases to be possible to regard it as a miracle, and if we can but make the woolly-headed men understand those laws, they perceive their error in supposing it to be specially divine. So, then, with the Scripture miracles, if they are relegated back to the world of law. No matter how much higher the law, they cease to be miracles, precisely the same as the comets ceased to be viewed as extraordinary phenomena, immediately it became known that they were subject to law.

Thus, if the Scripture miracles are to preserve their place in the Church theory, it can only be as events and works which transcended the ordinary and extraordinary laws of Nature. Hence there is a certain admirable consistency in the arguments of Dr. Wardlaw, who contends for their being received as "works involving a temporary suspension of the known laws of Nature; or, a deviation from the established constitution and fixed order of the Universe; or, perhaps more correctly, of that department of the Universe which constitutes our own system; whose established order and laws we are capable to the full extent requisite for the purpose, of accurately ascertaining; works, therefore, which can be effected by no power short of that which gave the Universe its being, and its constitution, and its laws."† There is at least a consistency in the maintenance of those views which deserves respect, even although we may reject the conclusion to which they lead. For manifestly every man who speaks of a miracle means neither more nor less than this, that in order to their being accomplished, the laws of Nature were suspended, and that the effect produced is precisely the reverse of what would have occurred had it not been for that suspension. Show him that there was no suspension, that there was no unusual or unnatural action, and the idea of miracle is at once at an end.

(To be continued.)



* Olshausen. Comment. Gospels, i. p. 236.

† Wardlaw on Miracles, p. 24.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XV.

THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND.

DOCTOR MOULE was not partial to archæology, so there was not much in Crosswood which he cared to see, or that Lester, under present circumstances, cared to show; but, as usual when leading a visitor, the latter, from habit, took the way to his church, of which he was somewhat proud. Like the town itself, it was compounded of parts which had been built at wide intervals of time, and each portion bore the peculiar impress of its age. Saxon, Norman, and Florentine architecture, with all their most marked contradictions, were strangely blended; but although there was no sameness in the different styles of building, the architects of the various portions seemed to have been unanimous in resolving to make everybody who attended the service as uncomfortable as possible. Here a pillar shut out the reading desk from view, there the echo of the singing was intolerable. At one place the draught was bitter, and at another there was no light; some of the pews were very high-backed, while others were very narrow; and, in fact, there was no part of the building without objectionable points, when considered as a place wherein people were to be taught and were to worship. On the walls there were a goodly number of tablets and monuments, but, as is commonly the case, none that repaid the lover of art for the trouble of inspecting them: There were angels bending and weeping over tombs, and other similar emblematic monumental groups, but the figures were as devoid of character as the designs were of common sense.

Doctor Moule, pointing to one of the ugliest, asked, "Why should the angels be represented as weeping? or why," and here he pointed to a massive tomb, "why should those—angels, I suppose they call them, be represented as fat boys with chubby cheeks, who, in a fit of anger, because they cannot obtain toffy-money, are sticking their knuckles into their eyes? If I, for one month, were the despot of England, among the first of my acts of despotic

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES, VOL. II.

K

power, there would appear an order for purging all our ecclesiastical edifices of the rubbishing, ungainly monuments which now disfigure their walls."

"But you would not prohibit all sepulchral monuments?"

"On the contrary, I would promote their erection, but only when a few conditions had been complied with. First, I would be sure the deceased was worthy of being held in remembrance; next, sure that the monument was worth erection; and, finally, I would have its site so chosen that the work should neither be a nuisance to those who have sittings in the building, nor be erected at the expense of damaging a much superior piece of work. I remember being very much annoyed when going through Westminster Abbey at seeing how ridiculously great and small men are mingled together. In a common crowd we expect to find both heroes and cowards, both wise men and fools, or even honest men and knaves; but we ought not to have the same mixture in our 'Temple of Fame.' But when a great man is buried there, the sculptors imagine that he cannot be supplied with a tomb unless barbarian nudity, Roman togas, or some other equally foreign and false features are introduced. Not that it matters much, for, as a rule in our churches, the monuments of the dead are erected so as to annoy the living, and to that end bad designs work better than good ones. Look, for instance, at that projecting mass of ugliness near the communion rails. Who and what was Jacob Masters, 'of this parish,' that he should have been endowed with the right, as a dead man, to annoy everybody sitting on the left of the gallery, by shutting out, with that ugly figure, the view of the proceedings?"

"I wish it were away," said Lester, "for it is a great eyesore, and there are no reasons against its removal, for no relicts of his family remain in England. But if I were to touch it to remove it, the whole parish would be up in arms about the desecration, and just at present it will be best to withhold that bone of contention."

"Yes, I suppose yours is a quarrelsome parish. I have had a pretty character of it from my old friend Henley, and Barrington declares that, like the Connaught Irishmen, 'the people are never at peace unless when engaged in a brawl.'"

"They are not so quarrelsome as they are captious and suspicious. They seem to look upon every word I utter in a false light, and each hearer remembers the discourse by parts only. If I venture upon any strong statement, and furnish reasons strong enough to justify my words, they remember and repeat the statement, but not the modifying clauses or the explanations. I have been bored to death by letters containing condemnatory criticisms of my sermons, and, in many instances, when I have put a case hypothetically, I have been written to about it upon the assumption of its having been given as a fact, and the more careful I am to avoid mistakes, the more frequently they seem to be fallen into."

"Of course they are. The best plan for a preacher is, as a rule, to pay little or no attention to the critical letters of his correspondents. They don't know what they are writing about, for, in nine cases out of ten, they have never studied the matter at issue, and probably never even thought of it until they heard the sermon. Go on in your own way, without thinking or caring for criticism; always endeavour to reach your best, and then all these mere meddling scribes will soon be induced to save their paper and time. But what have we here? This, I suppose, is a specimen of the Crosswood poetry," said the Doctor, reading from a slab on one of the pillars:

“‘ She yt lies here, was while she stood,
 A very glorie of womanhoode:
 Even here was sowne most pretious dust,
 Which surely shall rise with the just.’

The lines halt most intolerably, and the sense is somewhat obscure. But your people seem to entertain the notion that the dead are to rise from the graves in precisely the same form that they were laid there, for here is another to the same effect;

‘ God formed them from the dust, and He once more
 Will give them strength and beauty as before,
 Though strewn as widely as the desert air,
 As winds can waft them, or the waters bear.’ ”

“ Yes,” interposed Lester, “ and I lost three members out of my church through hinting, in one of my sermons, that the idea of a bodily resurrection is at variance with what science teaches. They waited upon me, to learn my real sentiments ‘ upon that vital question,’ as they phrased it; and when I had told them my conviction that the dead wait not in their graves, but are instantly borne away to their new sphere of being, although I urged it was a matter of no practical importance how much men differed upon such subjects, one of them, an old gentleman, flew into a towering passion, declaring that he had taught his children to believe that the bodies will rise with every mark, every speck, and finger-nail upon them, and he would not be contradicted in the presence of his children. ‘ Moreover,’ said one of his companions, ‘ we are not going to be led to the devil by any rector; ours is the high road to heaven, and so, Sir, we bid you farewell.’ ”

“ A fair hit that,” interposed Moule.

“ Yes, so I felt,” continued Lester, “ but I knew the speaker to be notorious for giving short-weight, so I quietly told him that his belief upon such points would do nothing towards saving his soul; but that proper balances, and a fair turn of the scale when dealing with the poor, would be more likely to gain him a passport into blessedness. That, of course, made matters worse, and I lost them all.”

At one end of the Churchyard, Stevens was busily employed digging a grave, but being so far advanced in years, and somewhat scant of breath, his progress was slow. Advancing ahead of the Doctor, Lester made up to the old man, saying, “ Here, Stevens, is a much-valued friend of mine who wants to see how you manage to get your graves so neatly dug.”

“ There’s no great art in it, Sir, but practice does a great deal,” answered he from the pit, “ and, perhaps, there may be, as people say, a little of a gift in it. I knows men who have tried hard enough and yet after all they couldn’t dig a grave fit for a dog to lie in. And for the matter of that there’s many of ‘em who follow the purfession who are not much better. They have no idea o’ digging it neatly and in order. I’d be ashamed to leave the sides and edges so ragged as they leave ‘em.”

“ So you consider that your business belongs to the professional class,” observed the Doctor.

“ Yes, Sir, I does,” said Stevens. “ And what else is it? It’s not a trade I’ve been told, it’s not a calling, and what else can it be but a purfession? ”

“ Well, then, as we are both professional gentlemen,” said Moule, “ you will not take it amiss if I ask whether yours is a thriving one. Are you particularly busy at this season? ”

“ No, Sir, for as Solomon says, ‘ there is a time for all things,’ and I’m

sure that this is not the time for grave-digging. Things is very dull just now, very dull; indeed what the papers say about the general dullness of business, is true just now of grave-digging, for altho' I've been grave-digger here for above thirty-five year, I never knew things to be flatter than they are just now."

"How do you account for that?" asked Moule. "Have the people hereabouts given up drinking beer, have they taken to baths, or have the doctors emigrated?"

"Neither, that I knows of, Sir," said Stevens, throwing up a shovelful of earth, and deliberately proceeding to light his short black pipe, "I accounts for it all by the weather. The best time for us is when there has been a few days pretty sharp frost, followed pretty closely by a sudden thaw, then the weak 'uns goes off like rotten sheep—business becomes quite brisk again, and I'm amost taken off my legs, for I can't get through digging so many of a day now as I could thirty year ago."

"You speak of grave-digging in a light, off-handed business tone," said Lester, "just as though you were a man of no feeling, and no sense of the losses death makes for a family. Do you believe it to be a proper cause for rejoicing that men die?"

"I see no good in living, Sir. What have I got by it beyond hard knocks, a poor pension, and rheumatiz? When I buries a man I feels that I ha' done him a kind action, for the poor fellow is put out of the reach of all trouble, and that's more nor I can hope for myself until somebody buries me, as I suppose they will do, very soon now."

"But at your age you should have no trouble. Young people are full of troubles because of not understanding the course of life, but with your experience you should know better. And having been parish clerk so many years, you ought, by this time, to have learnt not to murmur at the little difficulties of life."

"That may be, and I dare say, Sir, as it 's right enough; but somehow, and I can't help it, I must grumble a little, and be a bit discontented. When I was a little boy I learnt the catechism, and ever since I ha' tried, uncommon hard, to make myself right content in my station, but somehow or t'other I never could do it rightly. I always wanted to get on a bit better, and tryin' seemed to do me good. All my neighbours seems to want to do the same, though they make but a poor hand of tryin'. I never did feel contented and when anybody had served me out badly, I always hated 'em, and was terrible discontented if I couldn't get the chance of paying 'em back in their own coin. I dare say it's not right, but somehow it runs in my blood."

Here Lester read his clerk a short but pointed lecture upon the sin of hating, and the great virtue of forgiveness, closing up with the remark that "we are taught in the Scriptures to love and not hate our enemies."

"Oh, that verse always ha' troubled me, 'specially when I was a soldier," put in Stevens, "for I couldn't do it. I fought against the French, and our Chaplain used to preach it into the regiment that we was to forgive and love our enemies, which was as good as saying we was to love the French soldiers first, and then obey our orders in killin' 'em as fast as possible directly arterwards."

"Come away, and let us walk farther," said Moule, "for that old man is not to be deluded with mere words. You cannot remake him, but may cause him to become miserable. Besides, what is the use of telling him to love

his enemies, when you know that he cannot do it if he would, and should not if he could? I like that saying of old Dr. Johnson's that he loved a good hater. I shall never try to love a bad man, for if success attended the effort, then it is a sure thing that I should soon come to care but little for the good ones. Stevens hated his enemies, as all men have done; and I have always felt that Jesus did not love the Pharisees or any of those who, for a pretence, made long prayers."

"You are right," said Lester, "and it was while endeavouring to give my people the proper meaning of that celebrated sentence, that I gave offence to one of my wardens. He had been used to the old translation, and although I showed him its incorrectness, and although he professed to believe that the Scriptures are Inspired Writings, he actually protested against my giving the true rendering; 'because,' as he said, 'it makes people altogether doubt the Book, and thus helps to spread unbelief.' So that if I preach from the Book as it is, I must do violence to my knowledge of the original; and if I retranslate it so as to omit the false meanings which are suggested by our translation, I lay myself open to the imputation of desiring to overthrow the Scriptures."

"There is, however, no difficulty, George, for who are they that call you to account? What do they know of the matter? The fact is, that the majority of men neither know nor care anything about the subject. All they know is that it is considered respectable to maintain certain theories about God and the Bible, and they go on maintaining them without either understanding or attempting to discover the actual truth in relation to them."

Walking and talking the two friends reached the end of Crosswood, and were somewhat astonished to find that a crowd of people had gathered upon the edge or corner of the common, just where the broad London road branching off presents so noble an appearance. Advancing towards the crowd, they heard the loud voice of a man who was addressing the people, and who was evidently in earnest. He was what is called a "local preacher," and the gathering constituted what is known in religious circles as "a camp-meeting." When Lester discovered what it was he felt inclined to turn back, but, being hurried forward by the Doctor, who had hold of his arm, he reached the outer circle, just in time to hear the following closing words of the preacher.

"And now, my friends, just let me tell you this plain truth, which it seems to me as I must tell. You must believe if you want to be saved, and if you won't believe you will just be damned, and that's all about it. There is no mistake that hell-fire for ever will be your allowance, so you'd better be smart in deciding. Jesus has come to you all to-night—will you turn him away empty-handed, and not give him your souls? If you are stupid, and won't give up your souls to him, then the devil will have them. And don't go about to say that you are too poor, for he likes the poor best; he don't like rich men; remember the needle and the camel, they can't be saved; don't say that you are too tired, for he won't ask you to work out your salvation, and he just don't want you to be doing anything; don't say that you are too dirty, for he will wash you whiter than snow; and don't say that you are too great a sinner, for it's sinners he wants—he don't want saints, if he did, then he wouldn't get any, you know that well enough, the worse you are, the more will he rejoice. Even if you have murder'd a father or a brother, a mother or a stranger, and will go to him, if you will only believe, then shall you be saved; and should you die this very night, you will wake in Paradise clothed in shining robes, to be at peace in heaven with the Lamb for ever and ever,

But should you stubbornly refuse to believe, should you harden your stony hearts against the Lord, as the wicked infidels have done, should you madly refuse the mercy now offered to you, and which may never be offered again, should you speak against religion as that wretched Stokes has spoken, or should you talk against the Bible as the poor blinded rector of our town has done, and is constantly doing—

Here there was a loud groan, and many ejaculated "May the Lord turn their hearts," to which others added the "Amen."

"Yes," continued the preacher, with great emphasis, "and may the Lord turn their hearts, for if in mercy HE does not do so, they are lost souls; and unless you all refuse to walk in their stubborn ways there is nothing, nothing, nothing, but damnation for you. Think of that, my dear friends—nothing but a brimstone HELL for ever and ever, where you shall still burn and burn, and never be burned. So just think now, if you won't have faith in Jesus, and believe that he is the God of Salvation, you will burn in flames for ever. Don't swallow the Devil's poison, and go on to believe that you will save yourselves by good works without faith, for God hates your good works, which in His sight are only filthy rags. He would rather have the greatest reprobate and sinner that ever lived, but who at length gets faith in Jesus, than the most moral of men who has not the sound form of believing. Come, then, and be saved while there is time; don't stand there to be damned. I tell you plainly, as the Lord Jesus now bids me, that the hour will soon be here when it will be too late, and if you go to the burning, if you are lost it will not be laid to my charge."

This burst of insane dogmatism was followed by the hymn, "Come to Jesus," which was loudly shouted, not sung, by at least three hundred voices, after which there was the usual benediction, when the company broke up into many small parties, each of which marched away, singing some of the well-known Methodist hymns. Lester's presence had not been observed by the preacher, nor, indeed, by any of the crowd, for the darkness was gathering fast, and as yet no star shone out in the heavens. With the Doctor, but more heart-sick, he turned silently away, walking quickly, so as to get far ahead of the smaller parties before speaking. At length he turned to his companion, and asked—

"What do you think England is coming to, now that such mad discourses are delivered by uneducated men to ignorant crowds gathered on the road-sides?"

"Think? Why, that the Church is solely to blame! If the people are ignorant, whose fault is it? If they cannot detect the blasphemy that underlies such discourses, the well-paid clergy are responsible for having permitted them to grow up in such a state of ignorance."

"Granted, Doctor, but what can be done to repair the evil? I have long seen that it's no use merely dwelling upon the cause, I want to find the remedy, and if anybody can show it, then I would not care for the costs; it should have me as its friend."

"There is no remedy other than this, to educate the people up to a much higher standard than was formerly dreamt of. Give them real knowledge, and the scales will fall from their eyes. It is of no use to attack their prejudices, because, unless they first get knowledge, it's impossible for them to avoid suspecting the assailant. If, however, they get real knowledge, there will be no more need to attack their false ideas than there is to disprove the theories of witches, giants, and fairies. The shell of in-

tolerant bigotry and narrowness will be cast when the robe of knowledge is put on."

"Ah, yes, Doctor, but what else will be cast off with it? Will not Faith in God, and, indeed, all religion, go with it? They may learn more of the world and its wonders, and come to believe less of God and His goodness. I both see and feel that the first result of such education will be the repudiation of all religious claims. And if so, what of it? When a body is diseased we frequently administer a medicine whose first effect is to produce nausea and other unpleasant sensations. That, however, furnishes no reason against its use; the ultimate effects are curative, and that is all we care about. But who is 'the infidel Stokes,' the preacher connected with yourself?"

"Personally, I do not know him, but I intend to pay him an early visit. I have heard that he is a confirmed Atheist, which, however, may not be any nearer the truth than it is when they say that I deny the Bible. It is really quite dangerous to repeat what one hears in Crosswood."

"And yet," said the Doctor, "you want me to come and reside here."

"Yes, I do; and I don't think what the people should choose to say about you will hinder your coming."

"Certainly not, George; for if I require boots, clothes, or servants, they will readily supply my wants if I carry the cash in my hand. Why, then, am I to trouble about their idle talk? But come, the night has closed in, and I must not leave the rectory without giving an hour or so to Ella. Perhaps she can persuade me to come."

Lester hurried forward, but whether it was to hint his hopes to his sister, must, for the present, remain untold.

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PAPYRI.

So much has recently been spoken and written about the ancient writings of the Egyptians, that the following passages from an essay by Mr. Goodwin, better known as one of the Seven Essayists and Reviewers, cannot fail to be interesting to our readers. After having given an account of the Sallier and other papyri, of a date anterior to Abraham, he thus proceeds:—

I have now to present to the reader an author to whom Penta-our and Enna would have bowed as a venerable sage, and have acknowledged themselves but children in comparison with him. Rise up, Ptah-hotep, king's son, provincial governor, or lord-lieutenant in the reign of Assa, sovereign of both Egypts. It will be asked, when then did King Assa reign? Perhaps, no more can be certainly affirmed of him than that he belongs to one of the earliest Egyptian dynasties (Lepsius places him in the 7th). Speaking vaguely, he may be placed about 3000 B.C. The work which bears the name of Ptah-hotep, may not, perhaps, be quite so old as this. The papyrus which contains it was obtained by M. Prisse d'Avennes while making explorations among the tombs of the early Theban kings of the eleventh dynasty, the ancestors or predecessors of Amen-em-ha, the founder of the twelfth dynasty. In the course of one of these explorations, an Arab employed in the work of excavation, produced a papyrus which he pretended to have got from a third party, but which there is every reason to believe he had found in the tomb under examination. It is in hieratic characters, but extremely different in appearance from those of the nineteenth dynasty. A little attention, however, shows that the writing is essentially the same, and, any one

acquainted with the works of the Ramesside period, will quickly be able to identify the symbols and groups. The forms of the characters are bold and massive, and at first sight appear clumsy; but when the archaic forms have been mastered, the manuscript appears to be not less carefully written than the best of the later epoch, if, indeed, it does not surpass them in this respect. Mr. Heath was the first to call attention to the contents of this papyrus, in an essay published in the "Monthly Review," 1856, entitled, "On a Manuscript of the Phœnician King Assa, ruling in Egypt earlier than Abraham." It has since formed the subject of an able *Étude* by M. Chabas, of Châlons-sur-Saône, a distinguished French Egyptologist, published in the "Revue Archéologique" during the present year, to which I am indebted for the extracts I am about to give. Mr. Heath has also lately published a translation of the whole, containing some valuable hints, but which will require, as we believe, considerable revision before it can be considered as representing with accuracy the opinions of Ptah-hotep, whose name Mr. Heath converts into Aphobis.

The Prisse papyrus contains eighteen pages of writing, the first two being the conclusion of a work. Then follows an erasure of the size of a page or two, the papyrus having been carefully scraped, as if with the intention of inserting a new text. After this come sixteen pages, which comprise a complete work, entitled, "The Instructions of the Magistrate Ptah-Hotep, under 'His Majesty the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Assa, Everliving.'"

The author of the fragment on the first two pages, whose name is not given, and who may or not have been Ptah-hotep, says, 'When the king of both Egypts, Our-en, died, then the king of both Egypts, Snefrou, became the king of the whole land. Then was I made a magistrate.' We have here mention of one of the oldest kings of Egypt of whom any contemporaneous monumental traces remain. The tablets of king Snefrou, at Wadi-Megara, in the Sinaitic peninsula, recording his conquests over the Arabs, are thought to be the earliest historical monuments in existence. Whether, however our papyrus goes back to this date may well be doubted. It may, very probably, be a production of some writer of the court of the Antef kings, of the eleventh dynasty, who put his own maxims into the mouth of a sage of former days, just as we find Enna, of the court of Seti II., writing the instructions of Amen-em-ha. There can be little hesitation, however, in recognising, with MM. Chabas and de Rougé, this MS. as the most ancient book in the world, unless, indeed, we accept another, said to be of the same epoch, now at Berlin. The contents of both works in the Prisse papyrus, that of which we possess but the last two pages, and that which fortunately remains entire, are much of the same kind. They were collections of proverbs or maxims upon moral and social subjects. The obedience of children to their parents is particularly dwelt upon. We shall borrow a specimen from M. Chabas:—"The obedience of a docile son is a blessing: he who is obedient walks in his obedience, and he who listens to him becomes obedient. It is good to listen to everything which produces affection; it is the greatest of blessings. The son who attends to the words of his father will become old thereby. God loves obedience; disobedience is hated by God. The heart is a man's master for obedience or for disobedience, but a man through obedience causes his heart to live; to listen to instruction, to love to obey, this is the fulfilment of good precepts. The obedience of a son to his father is joy. A son of whom this can be said is agreeable in all respects, docile and obedient; he of whom this is said

"has piety in his bowels; he is dear to his father, and his fame is in the mouth of the living who walk upon the earth.

"The rebellious one, who obeys not, accomplishes nothing at all; he sees wisdom in ignorance, virtue in vice. Every day he commits all sorts of frauds with boldness, and therein he lives as one dead. His are contradiction; he feeds therein. That which the wise know to be death is his life every day. He goes on his way, loaded with curses daily. "A son, teachable in God's service, will be happy in consequence of his obedience; he will grow to be old, he will find favour; he will speak in like manner to his children. Precious for a man is the discipline of his father. Every one will respect it, as he himself has done. That which he says to his children concerning it, oh! let their children repeat it, feeding on that which proceeds from thy mouth, the true seed of life to thy children."

Ptah-hotep continues his instructions by saying:—"It is thus that I would gain for thee health of body and the king's peace, in all circumstances, and that thou mayest pass the years of this life without deceit. I have become an ancient of the earth, I have passed a hundred and ten years of life by grace of the king, and the approbation of the ancients, fulfilling my duty towards the king, in the place of their favour." The scribe adds—"Finished from beginning to end, as it is found in the original." Enough has been said to convince the reader that we have in the papyri something more than the mere dry bones of the Egyptian language, and to prove their importance towards the completion of our knowledge of this wonderful people. The value, however, of the monumental and sepulchral records must not be underrated. These have yielded the most brilliant results to the labours of antiquaries. Through their assistance the names of whole dynasties of forgotten kings have been recovered, and great progress made towards the completion of the chronicles of Egypt, of which the fragments of Menetho give us but a bare and defaced outline. The late researches of M. Mariette in the Serapeum, or tomb of the Apis gods, have been particularly fruitful in materials for this purpose. From them M. Lepsius has restored the twenty-second and some part of the twenty-first dynasties. The annals of the reign of Tothmes III. on the walls of Karnak, which have been successfully translated by Mr. Birch, are a noble record of the splendour of the Egyptian monarchy at the commencement of the eighteenth dynasty.

The labours of Egyptologists during the last thirty years have been vigorous and well directed, yet how much remains to be done before Egypt's "place in the world's history," not chronologically merely, can be defined and appreciated. The names of her kings have been collected from the stones of their palaces and tombs with unwearied industry, and now the Königbuch of Lepsius presents lines of monarchs more interminable than that which the witches' cauldron disclosed to Macbeth; but for us the most of them are but ghostly nonentities—as shadows they come, and so depart. The works of Sir Gardner Wilkinson are in everybody's hands; and here the Egyptians as painted by themselves move and gesticulate before us; yet how silently! Who has not felt, in surveying the minute details of Egyptian life which those interesting volumes present, the wish that these people could speak for themselves, and tell us something of their thoughts and feelings?

It is through the hieratic papyri that we once more hear the voice of these ancients, speaking more or less intelligibly, and as man with man. The heart of Satou is found. By-and-bye these sepulchral utterances will be plainer to us than they are yet. Penta-our and Enna will yet walk and talk

again, "as they did upon the earth," according to the aspiration found in every page of the ritual. But patience and labour are still required before the vivification is complete. The crying want is for more papyri. It is true that the greater part of those which we already possess have been but imperfectly read, but every additional one increases the chances and means of discovery. A few more in the style of the Two Brothers would be of immense value. And some such surely must exist, either above or below the ground. It is to be feared that an enormous destruction has taken place of these fragile records. The Anastasi, Sallier, and D'Orbiney papyri probably all came from a single tomb, and are the remnants of a large collection. What has become of the rest? At one time mere ignorance and carelessness on the part of the Arabs, who are usually the finders of these treasures, caused their destruction. At present these people are well aware of the commercial value of papyri, and unluckily this knowledge is accompanied by another cause of ruin; for their desire of making the most of their commodities, leads them to break up the manuscript into fragments. And so perish the world's records!

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXXIV.

GREGORY OF HEIMBURG AND JACOB OF JUTERBOCK.

THE sources and characteristics of the Reformation were manifold. It was a revolt, on the part of the laity, against the priesthood, arising from a desire to break the chain of slavery which the Church had bound around men in every relation of life. It was, too, a religious movement arising from disgust at the vice and degradation of the clergy, and having for its aim the restoration of the purity of early Christianity. It was, moreover, an intellectual rebellion against the ignorance which had been fostered by the Church. In some measure, also, it was a priestly movement of national Churches to emancipate themselves from the supremacy of Rome, and, in this connection, ambition, greed, hate, bad motives, and sordid considerations, all had their part, more or less, in bringing it about; while, as we have already pointed out, the disputes of the Schools had not a little to do with it. And, lastly, one of its most important sources of success lay in the fact, that it became so generally a national movement, based on patriotic feelings, or political considerations. All these things will have to be taken into account in forming our estimate of the Lutheran epoch, which became what it was because, in the person and age of Luther, so many of these influences converged to a focus.

We have already seen somewhat of the contest of reason and authority in the Schools, and of the work done by Wycliffe in England, and Huss in Bohemia, and of other the movements within and without the Church. During all this time, the Germans had remained the obedient sons of the Church, and it was to be some time ere, as a people, they were to become thoroughly roused to opposition. Although John of Goch's influence was by no means unfelt in Germany, it was in the Netherlands, nearly a century after his time (through the publication of his writings, and the advocacy of his principles, by Cornelius Graphæus), that his influence was most felt, and, assisted by other causes, bore its fruit in the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain. We have now to turn our attention to the commencement of the patriotic movement in Germany against the Papacy. These we find in the writings and career of Gregory of Heimburg. It is a mark of the change

which was now taking place in the views and feelings of men, that this Gregory was not an ecclesiastic, but a layman. In fact, the age of the civilians had now arrived, and a knowledge of law and learning was no longer to be confined to the clergy. In looking at what this Gregory did and said, we find that the servile belief of the laity, in the power and dignity of the priesthood being something far too sacred to be touched by their profane hands, was rapidly departing; for, not merely did he oppose the vices of the hierarchy, and attack their extortionate demands and abuse of power, but entered into an examination of the bases on which that power rested.

Gregory came of a noble Franconian family, and studied at the university of Wurzburg, where he took the degree of Doctor of Laws in the year 1430. He spent most of his life in the city of Nuremburg, a city already distinguished by its liberal tendencies, as we saw in the treatment which John Huss met with there. Gregory held there the office of City-syndic. "Three tendencies," says Ullmann, "different in kind, but yet auxiliary to each other, are prominently conspicuous in his life; first, lively zeal for the commencement "of the study of classical literature and eloquence in Germany; secondly, "active endeavours to strengthen the tottering empire, to promote its unity "and independence, and exalt the class of peaceful and industrious citizens "in opposition to the martial power of the princes; and, thirdly, indefatigable "war against the encroachments and usurpations of the hierarchy."* The moving spring of his action was patriotism, and he, therefore, represents the early growth of that side of the Reform movement. Like all who honestly work for the future, who oppose the powers that be, Gregory had to suffer; to suffer, not only the hatred of those he worked against, but the coldness and neglect of those he was working for. Such has ever been the hard lot of the progenitors of those movements which in their success have blessed mankind. It is instructive to compare the fate of this man with that of Æneas Sylvius, with whom he was associated in his early career in opposition to the hierarchy. Gregory remained true to his principles, and died in poverty, exile, and excommunication: Sylvius betrayed them, and rose from rank to rank, until he became Pope Pius II. Such instances are found in all times; the man of honesty, who unflinchingly stands by the truth, must be prepared to suffer; yet, after all, he is happier than he who betrays the truth.

Throughout the entire Middle Ages there was existent, hidden, it is true, but not quenched, the spirit which produced the Reformation. It is only by the light of this fact, that the political struggles of those ages can be understood. What were Guelph and Ghibelline but the supporters and opposers of the Church represented by the Papacy? The Church triumphed over the Empire, but she failed to destroy the political animosity towards her engendered by that fact. So it is, that in the literature produced by the darkest of the Dark Ages there is hidden under the guise of fable and covert satire, a feeling of uncompromising hostility to the Church. The secret societies of the Middle Ages, of which so little is really known, were doubtless political combinations against the Papacy; and, as has been repeatedly pointed out, the spirit of the Italian Classics—Dante, Petrarch, and others—is entirely anti-papal, and (as the Church and Papacy had become so intimately bound together), therefore, antagonistic to the Church. This, too, becomes evident, in the ready listeners and abettors that such men as Arnold of Brescia and Rienzi obtained. Beneath the seeming submission to the Spiritual Despotism there was ever a spirit of secret and deadly enmity to

* Reformers before Reformation, i. 69.

the Church of Rome, arising from political considerations; and there were men "who," as a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* has remarked, "safe behind the shield of their secret associations, ministered weapons to the more daring assailants, who rushed desperately against the leading files of the array of Papal Despotism."* What was needed to set this secret hostility free? what to make this deadly enmity do its natural work? The enlightenment of the people; and the strengthening of the Empire, if that were possible. Gregory was among the first to see this, hence his efforts in those directions. The means of the enlightenment of the people was achieved by the Revival of Letters and Learning in Europe, at the causes of which we shall look when we inquire exactly how that Revival was related to the Reformation; as for the Empire, that was dead, past any strengthening. But by rousing a patriotic spirit and political life in Germany Gregory did much to create a national party against the Church, and to give a voice to that secret hostility of which we have spoken.

There was, however, another side to the political element in the Reformation, that must not be forgotten—not the patriotic, but the democratic. It was a natural consequence of the teaching of the Church, that all Civil Authority emanated from the Priestly; for, of course, when people came seriously to doubt the one, doubts regarding the other would follow. This element, which derived additional force from the sufferings of the people, under the joint despotism of Church and State—we find making its appearance about the middle of the fifteenth century. John Behem, variously known as the "Holy Youth," and the "Drummer," took to preaching in the diocese of Wurzburg, and was followed by thousands of the people, who eagerly listened, while he inveighed against tithes and taxes, and "insisted that all road-money, tolls, servitudes, and other oppressive burthens, claimed by spiritual and temporal superiors, should be done away, and, on the other hand, insisted that hunting and fishing, and the free use of the forests should be common to every Christian man, without distinction, whether rich or poor, peasant, bishop, or prince." By way of answering him, the Bishop of Wurzburg burnt him. But his work was not without its fruit in the war of the peasantry which formed one side of the Reformation movement, and frightened many of the German princes, who would else have sided with Luther, back into alliance with the Papacy.

But besides these political and social causes, there was throughout the whole of the fifteenth century a continually-increasing and widening religious fermentation among the people of Germany, being the combined result of the work of the Waldenses, the Fraticelli, and the Hussites. For a long time, even so early as the thirteenth century, there had been a secret movement of this kind, having its source in the Waldensian teachings. There is no doubt that the people who called themselves "Friends of God," and who were very numerous in many parts of Germany, were, in fact, those who had secretly embraced those doctrines. Their emissaries spread all over Germany. Thousands of these people were, through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, detected, persecuted, and slain, without much being said of it; but the remembrance of their fate left in the minds of thousands a feeling, which grew stronger and stronger as the opening of the sixteenth century approached. Even in the time of Huss, these "Friends of God" were bold enough to greet him, denounced as a heretic though he was.

* See *Edin. Review*, vol. lv. Art. "The Anti-Papal Spirit of the Italian Classics," in which this subject is ably discussed.

While Gregory of Heimburg was actively engaged in opposition to the Church, by his writings stirring up the minds of the German people to oppose the Papacy and the hierarchy—if not with any immediate result, with effects which were to make themselves visible in an after time—we have, in the writings of a pious monk of that time—Jacob of Jüterbock—proof of the deep felt want of a change. The Church, he said, had become so corrupt and deformed that it was scarcely possible to believe in the possibility of a general Reform of it. The Pope, said Jacob, would never, and if he would, as a single fallible man, could not effect the needed Reform; the Church needed entirely remodelling. How far the reformatory tendency extended is shown in the fact that this pious monk, strict in all the duties of monkery, and believing in the Church with his whole soul, actually called the Pope “a fallible man,” and went so far as to say that God gave his infallible aid to none of the Popes, “not even the first (by whom he meant St. Peter), who,” said he, “we learn, from Scripture, fell into error, both before and after the effusion of the Holy Ghost.” It has been well said that his words remain as an important testimony how irresistibly the necessity for a reformation had forced itself upon the minds of even the most pious Churchmen. Yes, one feels that when a monastic recluse dared thus to speak of the Pope and Church, a great change must, indeed, have taken place in the views and feelings of men.

The various facts above-detailed, go far to show how, and in how many ways, the men of the fifteenth century were clearing the battle-field which Luther was to occupy. Like all other great workers in history, he appeared not until the time was ripe for him. He was the greatest of the Reformers, not because he created the movement, but that he directed it. The Reformation, like all other great historic movements, had its roots deep down in the centuries which lay behind it; and without the men and work of those centuries preceding him, Luther, and his career, had been an impossibility.

JAS. L. GOODING.

THE NATURE OF A MIRACLE.

FROM A LECTURE.

(Continued from p. 128.)

It has been generally believed that the working of miracles furnishes evidence of the worker being authorised by God—that the performance of such actions demonstrates him to be divinely commissioned, and, consequently, that we are bound to submit ourselves unto those who, in the name of God, both perform miraculous works and teach new doctrines. The common boast of our orthodox believers is, that they do not believe upon any evidence short of Divine, and when it is asserted that they have the authority of Heaven to vindicate that which they teach, it is meant that the miracles which were wrought furnished that vindication. It is sufficient now to show the unsoundness of such assertions, for to discuss the source of the error, or to develop the principles upon which it is founded, would lead us far away into the realms of human weakness and superstition, where black night and error reign in happy union.

The first objection to the popular theory is fatal, that is even when the popular theory of miracles advocated by Doctor Wardlaw is left unquestioned. That eminent writer said: “If a man announces himself as having been commissioned by God to propound a certain doctrine, or system of doctrines, as from Him, and for the truth of his commission and communication appeals to works such as no

"power but that of God can effect; if, upon making this appeal, these works are instantly and openly done at his bidding, there is no evading of the conclusion that this is a Divine interposition at the moment, in attestation of the authority he claims, and of the truth of what is declared."* There is nothing left, according to this, but that we submit ourselves, in all humility, and believe with all firmness. But, it may be asked, if God is bound by human fancy, and constrained to act whether He wishes it or otherwise, when men have resolved upon working wonders in His name. Dr. Wardlaw, consistently with his theory, contends that He is thus bound. The language employed is worthy of notice. He says: "When the appeal is made to His Name, and is avowedly designed to substantiate a claim to His authority, His permitting any real miracle, in such circumstances, to be performed, would be the very same thing as if He Himself by His own power directly effected it; just as for what is done in our name, not ostensibly merely, but with our admitted concurrence, we become, when it is in our power to hinder it, as really responsible as if we did it ourselves."† The human is thus supposed capable of constraining the Divine! According to this theory, when a man professes to work miracles in the name of God, then God cannot avoid restraining him if he has spoken falsely; because should He abstain from interfering, the innocent people will be deceived into accepting a false doctrine. But if this be true, how comes it that so many false doctrines have been taught, and taught, too, in the name of God? Rightly or wrongly, all great religious teachers have professed to be taught of God; they have given forth their religious lessons as heaven-descended, and until it can be shown that they claimed to be children and servants of the Devil, it will be perfectly legitimate to argue, upon Doctor Wardlaw's principles, that God is responsible for all the evil consequences which flowed from their teaching. They appealed to His Name, and to no other; they professed to be taught by Him, and by none other; and it was in His Name they wrought miracles. Thus, if there be any force in his reasoning, seeing that God did not interfere against them, we are bound to believe the doctrines they taught, and, consequently, must ally ourselves with Buddhists, or some other of the miracle-attested religions.

The common answer to this is that the wonders supposed to have been wrought by such persons were frauds and not substantial miracles. But this merely evades the difficulty, and does not remove it. It supposes that a case has been suggested such as could not possibly occur. The consequences to the people were precisely the same as if the wonders had been all which they supposed them to be; they honestly believed them to be real, and as it is difficult, even in our own age, to conceive of any sufficient test of the miraculous, it can hardly be said that in ancient times the generations of men should have been better provided, in this particular, than we are. They saw only what was generally believed to be proof of the Divine co-operation, and if Dr. Wardlaw's reasoning has any value, then God was as much bound to act against them as he could be to act against those who "actually wrought miracles." His honour was quite as much mixed up with one as it was with the other, and, in point of goodness and care for His creatures, His interference would be as essential.

They who argue that miracles furnish absolute proof of the Divine Interference, either omit to notice the various Biblical accounts of "miracles wrought by the ungodly," or they deny that any such have been worked. They are correct enough in the latter, but to maintain their position, they are compelled practically to deny the statements made in "Holy Writ." Evidently it was contemplated by the author of Deuteronomy that men would arise who would work miracles and teach false doctrines, provision being made for their punishment. Even if the sign or wonder came to pass whereof he spake, the people were not to believe the doctrine he taught, but were to put him to death. And surely it will not be said that such a one could have been acting under the guidance of Jehovah. Then, again, it is distinctly intimated in Matthew that miracle-workers in abundance will rise up to deceive: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and

* On Miracles, p. 43.

† Ibid, p. 189.

"shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." In other passages the same is set forth, showing clearly enough that it was in the mind of the earliest Christians to expect false men would work miracles. In his *Apology*, Justin speaks of "Simeon" as a worker of miracles, not denying their supernatural, but only their Divine character. He speaks of him as "One who was honoured as a God because of his wonderful works,"* but who, in fact, had been "put forward by the demons" in order to deceive mankind. Now, although it may be argued that Justin was deceived in supposing that such signs and wonders—miracles—had been wrought, it will scarcely be contended by any one that Jesus and Paul did not contemplate the existence of persons who would work them. If, however, any doubt remains, it must be swept away by the various statements in the Old Testament about miracles having been wrought by "evil ones." To go no farther than the Book of Exodus, we may fasten upon the account of Pharaoh's magicians, of whom it is set forth that they worked miracles of an astounding nature. It is stated that they turned water into blood, and did other things even more marvellous, but many of the orthodox writers endeavour to escape the dilemma by insisting, with St. Augustine, either that "the miracles were wrought by the power of Satan," or that they were not wrought at all. Farmer insists upon it that the whole course of proceeding pursued by the magicians was delusive, and Dr. Wardlaw repeats his objections.†

As a specimen of special pleading where the aim is to vindicate the text while making it yield a meaning quite the reverse of that which is indicated by philology and common sense, Farmer's observations are worth reading. He says: "With regard to the first attempt of the magicians, the turning rods into serpents; it cannot be accounted extraordinary that they should seem to succeed in it, when we consider that these men were famous for the art of dazzling and deceiving the sight; and that serpents, being first rendered tractable and harmless, as they easily may, have had a thousand different tricks played with them, to the astonishment of the spectators. Huetius tells us, that amongst the Chinese there are jugglers who undertake to turn rods into serpents; though, no doubt, they only dexterously substitute the latter in the room of the former. Now this is the very trick the magicians played: and it appears by facts, that the thing in general is very practicable. It is immaterial to account particularly how the thing was done, since it is not always easy to explain in what manner a common juggler imposes upon our sight. Should it be suggested that Moses might impose upon the sight of the spectators as well as the magicians; I answer, [mark this answer, which, of course, assumes all that should be proved], "that as he ascribes their performances to legerdemain, and his own to God; so there might and must have been a wide difference in their manner of acting: the covered arts of the magicians not being used by Moses, the same suspicion could not rest on him as did on them. What an ingenious writer asserts is not true, that according to the Book of Exodus, the outward appearance on both sides was precisely the same; for the Book of Exodus specifies a most important difference between the miracle of Aaron and the impostures of the magicians. For it says, that Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. But with regard to the magicians it uses very different language; for at the same time it says, They cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents, it expressly declares that they did this by their enchantments, or covered arts. And what in the most effectual manner prevented any apprehension that the serpent of Aaron was (like those of the magicians), the effect only of a dexterous management, not a miraculous production; God caused his rod to swallow up theirs; in which there was no room for artifice, and which for this reason the magicians did not attempt to imitate.

"With regard to the next attempt of the magicians to imitate Moses, who had already turned all the running and standing waters of Egypt into blood, there is no difficulty in accounting for their success, in the degree in which they suc-

* *Apologies* i. pp. 38-40.† *Essay on Miracles*.

"ceeded. For it was during the continuance of this judgment, when no water "could be procured but by digging round about the river, that the magicians "attempted, by some proper preparation, to change the colour of the "small quantity that was brought them; (probably endeavouring to persuade "Pharaoh, that they could as easily have turned a larger quantity into blood). In "a case of this nature, imposture might, and, as we learn from history, often did, "take place. It is related by Valerius Maximus, that the wine poured into the "cup of Xerxes was three times changed into blood. But such trifling feats as "these could not at all disparage the miracle of Moses; the vast extent of which "raised it above the suspicion of fraud, and stamped upon every heart, that was not "steeled against all conviction, the strongest impressions of its divinity. For he "turned their streams, rivers, ponds, and the water in all their receptacles, into "blood. And the fish that was in the river (Nile) died, and the river stank.

"Pharaoh not yielding to this evidence, God proceeded to further punishments, "and covered the whole land of Egypt with frogs. Before these frogs were "removed, the magicians undertook to bring (into some place cleared for the purpose) a fresh supply: which they might easily do, when there was such plenty "every where at hand. Here also the narrow compass of the work exposed it to "the suspicion of being effected by human art; to which the miracle of Moses was "not liable; the infinite number of frogs which filled the whole kingdom of Egypt "so that their ovens, beds, and tables swarmed with them) being a proof of their "immediate miraculous production. Besides, the magicians were unable to procure their removal, which was accomplished by Moses, at the submissive application of Pharaoh, and at the very time that Pharaoh himself chose; the more "clearly to convince him that God was the author of these miraculous judgments, "and that their infliction or removal did not depend upon the influence of the "elements or stars, at set times or in critical junctures."*

They who object to the criticisms of Strauss and others upon the "Miracles of "Jesus," as being refined, uncandid, and altogether at variance with the obvious meanings of the text, should bear in mind that those critics have but bettered the instruction given by Farmer and others, who undertook to demonstrate, so clearly as to leave no opening for doubt, that there was nothing miraculous in the doings of the heathen magicians. And the same course has been pursued when dealing with the celebrated instance of the "Witch of Endor raising the Spirit of Samuel." We do not believe in the story, neither do the orthodox; but then, having to defend it, they are constrained to distort, and practically to ignore, the true meaning of the text. They have in that the double difficulty, witchcraft and pagan miracle-working. Obviously, the idea of the author who furnished the narrative was, that the witch-woman actually called up the spirit of Samuel, and, consequently, that such miracles could be wrought by evil-disposed persons. The same, too, occurs in the history of "the temptation in the wilderness," the narrative, taken in its integrity, involves the conclusion that Satan possesses powers to transcend the ordinary laws of nature, and consequently to work miracles. So that if we were to see a miracle wrought before us, we should not have, in that fact, a proof of "Divine Interference," seeing that, according to the Scriptures, the evil-disposed have power to work them.

* Farmer on Miracles, p. 201.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XVI.

SAM STOKES, THE SHOEMAKER.

It was upon a beautiful morning in July that the Rector left home upon his long-contemplated mission of converting Samuel Stokes, better known in Crosswood as "the wicked old shoemaker." The sun shone forth in great splendour, and with warmth sufficient for inducing groups of tiny insects to venture out from their nests to frolic in its beams. There was a calmness in the atmosphere which was almost holy; and while the old hedgerows near the rectory filled the air with sweet-briar and honeysuckle fragrance, he could not avoid pausing to ask himself, how it were possible for intelligent men to deny the existence of God. He had a strange habit of discussing with himself, and sometimes he spent hours debating important points, quite as eagerly as if a living antagonist had been his companion. At such times he spake, now in loud and then in lower tones; and although he had no settled method of proceeding, commencing generally when some doubt crossed his mind, and always without any intention of pursuing his studies in such a way, he argued his best on both sides, and frequently made his own more difficult by the masterly manner in which he arranged the arguments of his imaginary opponent. On the present occasion his mind turned in the direction of Theistic evidences, and the argument he held was sufficiently powerful to deepen his conviction that it is far more difficult to conceive of a Universe without a God, than it is to demonstrate the being of an Intelligence which outlives and controls the forces of nature.

Roused from his argumentative reverie, he slowly pursued his way to the cottage in which Stokes resided. After passing through the little wicket he could not refrain from pausing to admire the neatness and well-tended aspect of the almost overstocked flower-garden in front of the shoemaker's home—it was so much superior to the similar patches in front of the neigh-

bouring cottages. Many choice plants were there, and all in a thriving condition. The pansies, of which several varieties were in full bloom, deserved all the admiration he bestowed upon them; the cloves, carnations, and picotees looked particularly strong and healthy, promising an abundance of rich bloom, all of which were well-provided with neatly-painted sticks and bits of wire to hold up their heavy heads; the pinks, some of which were in full bloom, were much finer than any the rectory garden could boast, and, although not well up in the mystery of propagating plants, he knew enough about pipings and layers to resolve upon asking Stokes for a few of each to plant in the next season under his study window.

Before reaching the green-painted cottage door, Lester had accounted to his own satisfaction for the superior aspect of this garden above all the others, by supposing it to be a source of relief for the owner to lay by for a time his lasts and awls in order to work a little with the spade. It served by its newness, by its being a change, as a kind of healthful recreation, which it would not be to others. They who had to win their daily bread as agricultural labourers cared not, as he imagined, to add to its amount by cultivating their cottage patches, and thus was explained their untended condition. But even if this were true, which is rather doubtful, Lester had forgotten to account for the neglect exhibited by the tailor, farrier, carpenter, wheelwright, and other skilled hands who lived in the same row, and whose patches were as full of weeds as were those belonging to the agricultural labourers. The former had more time upon their hands than Stokes had, and to them the use of a spade would have proved quite as refreshing as it did to him. But they used it not, and cared nothing about cultivating flowers. They liked a rose for the button-hole, but were not disposed to devote any time to rearing rose-bushes. The true cause or causes of this lay deeper than Lester had supposed. They were low in taste and self-respect, and knew nothing of what constitutes the truest pleasure of life. They had no education, no conception of mental culture, and consequently were without refinement and elevation of mind. The Blue Lion furnished them with occupation, far more attractive than a flower-garden, in the form of skittle-playing and dominoes; and they who lament that fact must not delude themselves with the belief that denouncing the folly is a step towards improvement. Until village education rises above its present miserable level, and some steps are taken towards supplying the fitting incitements to healthier and more elevating pursuits, the power of the Blue Lions and Poachers will continue unimpaired, and such men will surely tread the path which leads to social ruin. A few honourable exceptions—such as that of Stokes—of men fighting their own way into a much higher sphere of thought and life, will occasionally occur, but only as exceptions, for the majority will sink lower and still lower, until all hope of their future elevation, as a class, will become utterly vain.

The Rector's knock at the door was followed by the usual cry of "Come in!" at which he entered, and found the redoubtable Samuel Stokes, lapstone on knee, busy with his shoemending.

Stokes was a shortish, thickset, healthy-looking man; one who carried the mark of labour upon his horny hand, and wore a look of thorough honesty upon his face. His was one of those open countenances which win respect even before the owner has spoken. It was calm without being weak, and thoroughly independent without being either bold or impudent. Moreover, there was a certain waggery about the corner of his small mouth, and in the glint of his hazel eye, which spoke of good humour, and not less of healthy

digestion. There was nothing formidable or wicked in his appearance, and, indeed, it had been frequently urged against him that his countenance was so open, so honest, so prepossessing, and there was such an air of candour about him, that he was likely to deceive even the saints themselves. He gave himself no airs, and yet there was an undefined indication of pugnacity about him; not strong enough to justify the charge of being a challenger, but sufficiently marked to render it certain that he would not miss the chance of picking up the glove should it be cast at his feet. He was probably surprised at seeing Lester enter his cottage, but his manner gave no indication of it; for, with an air of good-breeding, he treated the visit as an event which called for neither apology nor flurry. Certainly he was amused at the look of astonishment his visitor cast over the interior, which was plainly and yet neatly furnished. Every cottage convenience was there; the walls were pretty well covered with engravings, set in homespun morocco paper frames; the dresser was well supplied with crockery ware, and a set of shining pewter plates; the floor was sanded, and every article in the room was in its place, as well as clean and free from dust, giving indications of good housewifery, with a love of order and neatness, without great display.

"Good morning, Sir," said Sam, "glad to see you in my little workshop. Is there any shoemaking or mending I can do for you?"

Lester was about to answer, when Mrs. Stokes entered from the back room, and modestly repeated the greeting. There was something in her mild look and manner which completely took him by surprise. She was not beautiful, but yet pleasant to look upon, in her printed cotton gown, checked apron, and clean white neckerchief. The neatest little woman, as he afterwards told his sister, that he had ever seen. And what surprised him most was her perfectly easy and graceful, or true matronly manner. There was nothing approaching to boldness in her address, and quite as little of servility.

Becoming conscious that his fixed gaze was likely to prove painful, Lester turned to answer the shoemaker's question.

"No, Mr. Stokes," said he, "I cannot say that I have any little job for you at present, and, indeed, my visit to-day has no connection with ordinary business. As the rector of this parish I have a strong desire to know all my parishioners, you, of course, among the rest. But my visit to-day has yet another cause. The fact is that I have been informed—I sincerely hope wrongly, and from what I have seen both out and inside of your cottage I believe it must be so—that you are an enemy of our holy religion, that you are in the habit of speaking very disrespectfully of the Scriptures, and, in fact, excuse my plainness, that you are a very bad and dangerous man. Having heard these things, I felt it to be my duty to pay you a visit, so that, if the rumour be true, I should try to open your eyes to the error of your ways; but I hope that, after all, the account I have heard is utterly untrue, and without any real foundation."

Without giving Sam time to reply, Mrs. Stokes interposed, saying,

"Yes, Sir, they do say my husband is a very bad man, but they know nothing about it, and from my heart I wish that every woman had as good a husband, and every child as good a father. I know what it's all about well enough; for it's true that he doesn't go to church, and it's true, too, that he doesn't go to the public. If he'd go to them two places nobody 'ud have a word against him. But I don't want it. I know there's many of 'em who go to church that are right good people, and there's a many who go that never knew what makes real goodness."

Sam gently interrupted his wife, saying, "Never mind, Hetty, what they say, leave me to answer the gentleman, and I dare say we shall get on well enough."

"Yes, yes," said Hetty, "you can answer all they can say, but I can't help speaking when I hear what lies these people tells. Here's this gentleman, who knows nothing about us, and they've been at him with their tales. I used to go to church, and, Sir," said she, turning to Lester, "took my children with me, and Sam never said I should'n't do it. There he sits, and can't deny it. But when I found out how the people were always a-meddling with other folk's business, and telling a pack of wicked lies about my husband, I couldn't stand it, and so I wouldn't go no longer. I couldn't sit there and see 'em look so saintly, when I knew what was in their hearts, and how ready they all was to speak evil of their neighbours. I don't mean any offence, Sir, and I hopes you'll understand what I want to say," and having thus spoken she quitted the room.

Relieved from all further risk of interruption, Stokes turned to the Rector, and said he was much obliged to him for calling. "But," he continued, "please don't call me *Mister* Stokes. The people round about calls me Shoemaker Sam, or plain Sam, or Stokes, and it sounds sort o' neighbourly. Some of 'em calls me by other names, which I don't like. The last rector used to say I was the 'Devil's Darling.' I didn't want that, but then, as he warn't a very charitable man, I took anything he had to give without saying much agen it. He used to tell people right out that it wor their duty never to come aneer me; and when I put it to him to tell me what that meant about them as wor well not needing a doctor, but only them as wor badly, he turned up the whites of his eyes, and said as how no doctoring would do me any good. Certain he never tried his hand at it. And, for the matter o' that, he didn't do much good to anybody, so I lost nothing. I wor born in this house, and all my ups and downs have been in it; I knows pretty well all the people in Crosswood, and I'm sure he never made any of 'em a bit wiser. The only ones he ever did any good to wor Neddy Wilson and his family, as kept the Lamb and Flag, and that was when he stopped the people from playing ball in the churchyard o' Sunday afternoons, for when they couldn't play they went to drink, and the place has been gettin' worse in that way ever since."

"But," said the Rector, "surely you will not complain of his having prevented such an improper use of the churchyard? Whatever a man's religious views may be, he can hardly avoid desiring to treat the ashes of the dead respectfully, and if the churchyard is to be made the common playground it is impossible that the proper respect can be maintained."

"Well, yes," said Sam, "there's a good deal in that, and often when I played there I didn't half like it. But why not find us another place? There used to be a good green, but, like everything else that was good for poor people, that's gone, and they said as how it would be better for it to be took in like, so as to grow corn and so on, and happen it's better for them that's got it, but we aint any better off for it."

"I doubt not," said Lester, "that the poor have been deprived of many advantages possessed by their forefathers; yet it is not wise to overlook that they enjoy privileges which formerly none but the rich could command. And the rector should not be held responsible for finding another place for the game you were speaking of to be played on. It was his duty to prevent the churchyard from being used in an improper manner."

"Perhaps so, but he never said nothing about the dead; what he said

was about keeping the Sabbath holy, and all that sort o' thing, and of course I know'd that wor only a blind to cheat poor people."

"Only a blind!" said the Rector. "I am astonished at your want of charity. You presume to charge a number of gentlemen and a clergyman with positive dishonesty, but if you had read your Bible you would know the commandment which renders it sinful to seek amusement and to labour on the Sabbath."

"Don't be offended, Sir," said Sam, but without exhibiting any sign of contrition for what he had said, "for I aint a bookish man, although I have read all the Bible, and, for the matter o' that, I know the commandments pretty well; but I judges people, not so much by what they says, as by what they does. And what I means is just this, that them as talks so much about keeping the Sabbath don't keep it themselves. I know the Old Rector didn't, for he always had his maids a sweating and a cooking quite as much, and sometimes more, o' Sundays than at other times. And then you know, Sir, for you've seen it sin' you've been here, there's all the carriages up at the church door o' Sundays, with the coachmen and grooms, and there's all them policemen, and hot-house gardeners, and such like, they works Sabbaths same as at all other times, and it's all right accordin' to some folks. It seems to me as if there warn't to be anything said about working for a master, but only about a man working for hisself, or nothing about gentlemen goin' out in their carriages, but only about poor folks goin' out for a bit of a game. There was Dimmock, the Warden, who was always a talkin' about the sin of Sabbath breakin', but when he wants to drive off anywhere, or to have a party, or to get in his hay, then all his people must work sharp enough."

The Rector here mildly interposed to say, "But, Mr. Stokes, or Sam, if that is your pleasure, you are to remember that it is unnecessary labour which is not to be done on the Sunday."

"Perhaps so, Sir, but then, you know, I can't find out that in the text; that has always seemed to me to be a little bit closed in like to make it fit our people. And it's hard to tell what is necessary. There's all them game-keepers out o' Sunday, looking a precious deal sharper than on other days, and I can't see how it can be necessary labour to preserve game. I s'pose a man can be saved even if there warn't a head o' game in the land. Indeed, I think it's a burnin' shame that it should be preserved at all, but I dare say by-and-bye, when our people gets a bit thicker out in India, and foreign parts, they'll preserve the lions and bears."

Lester felt the force of Sam's observations, indeed such thoughts had recently arisen in his own mind, for when planning and composing a discourse upon the manner in which, seeking their pleasure, the labouring classes spend the Sunday, he had been compelled to confess that the Upper Ten Thousand, not omitting the Clergy themselves, set them the example. It occurred to him, also, that his own bishop employed the usual number of gamekeepers, who, while their master was preaching upon the sin of doing any work (unnecessary work as he politely said) upon the seventh day, were busily employed protecting the preserves, which could not be considered a work of mercy or necessity. Feeling that he had got upon rather dangerous ground, and not caring to use arguments which opened the way for the retorts which Sam could so readily suggest, he struck away from the special into the general, and said,

"I am afraid, my friend, that what I have heard is correct; it seems

that you do not believe in the Scriptures, or religion at all. I gather this, not so much from any particular words you have uttered, as from the general character of your observations. You have not declared your unbelief, and thus I should like to hear what are your views upon those important points."

"Well, for the matter o' that," answered Sam, "I can't say as I should or should not like to be called a religious man. I aint sure as I knows what it is. I don't see as it makes any difference, because one aint no nearer knowin' what another is when we hears that he is religious."

"But there can be no mistake about a real religious life being better than a wicked life, and the two who lead such cannot be mistaken for each other."

"No, Sir; but perhaps you mean a good man when you say a religious man, and then I agree with you. There's Oldham, the miller up the hill, he's what the people hereaway call a Roman Catholic, and they do say that his family never changed sin' the time when there was such a lot o' folks burned about religion. Well, now, I knows him to be a right good man. Last winter we had the typhus here in Crosswood very bad, and down at the end of Bowlin Lane there's a cottage rented by some potter folk as goes to the fairs; the man lost a horse, and broke his leg, last autumn. Troubles never come alone, they always runs in a pack, and them two worked upon the woman, a weakly little body, and brought her to bed earlier than her time, and there was a terrible house of it, for the fever got in, and Doctor Small said as it was all owin' to the folks not havin' victuals enough. I've now and then done jobs for the potter, so I called in, friendly like, to see how all was a goin' on, and sure enough I did see a sight." At this point Sam ceased sewing, and looked up earnestly at the Rector, speaking with tongue, hands, and eyes. "There was five of 'em down in the fever, and there was nothin' in the house, and nobody to tend upon 'em. I was real frightened when the woman cried out to know if I had brought anything for the young uns to eat. I went away to see what could be got for 'em, and when I got up to Oldham's he was goin' into his yard. I told him what I had seen, and he says, 'Sam, I am sorry you are not a religious man; I'm sorry you don't belong to the true Church; but here's ten shillin' for them people, and when that's done they can have a little more, and if they can send up to my house the Missus won't send 'em away empty handed.' I didn't stop to tell un my mind just then, but I thought about it, that, although the parsons blow 'em up so much, his warn't a bad religion. Well, now, there's a lot of people about here who're always a prayin' and a preachin', and a goin' on about Oldham's devilish popish religion, as they calls it, and when I says that he is a good deal better than them, why they flares up savage like, and says the Old Rector was right when he called me the devil's child. But somehow I can't help believin' that them people as pays their way, as tells the truth, and does right, neighbourly like, being willin', night or day, to give poor folks a helpin' hand, has got hold of the true religion."

"There are many clergymen who will endorse that opinion," interposed Lester.

"Well, I'm glad of it, Sir. But the truth is that I don't trouble my head about it. If people will let what I call my religion alone, I shan't trouble them about theirs, but if they come botherin' me about it, I can't help givin' 'em such like answers as I believe to be true. There's a lot of 'em in this town who, without sayin' by your leave, and as full of impudence as a parish beadle, comes into a man's house and plants 'emselves down

just as if they paid his rent and kep' his family, and then they begins with a lot of stuff about how much they cares for poor souls. They cares a precious sight more to see if the seats is dusted afore they sits down, thinkin' more o' their clothes than of the peoples' souls. They says as how we are to believe this that and the other, and yet don't believe it themselves. And when I tells 'em a bit of plain truth, they flares up into a passion, and goes up and down the country side tellin' all sorts of lies about me. Last Sunday I had Mr. Wellbeloved and two women in here a-talkin' to me, as if they were little Gods, about my soul, and tellin' me I must have faith, and then they would warrant I should be saved. Now I knows that there isn't a bigger skinflint than he is, or a woman that makes more mischief in Cross-wood than one of his companions does. And I couldn't help tellin' 'em a bit of my mind. I hates that kind of religion which does with lyin', short-weight, bad wages, and scandal all the six workin' days, and then tries to make it up with God o' Sundays by goin' about distributin' tracts, and measurin' out damnation to the people. They have been skinnin' them all through the week, and then does their best to spoil their Sundays. But I dare say the poor blind things deserves more pity than condemnation. They don't know rightly what they believes, and they gets terrible angry with me because I won't agree to be like 'em. And if that's religion, then all I knows is that the sooner we ha' done with it the better."

After Sam had ended the Rector paused a moment, both to review what had been said and to arrange his answer. Perceiving that there was much truth if some false reasoning in the shoemaker's speech, he began by admitting that it was very bad for persons to speak falsely of their neighbours. "But then," he continued, "may it not be that they have a colourable reason for what they say? You have just told me that you do not 'trouble your head about religion,' and it is very sinful to speak thus. Moreover, as I gather from your statement, when questioned by your neighbours you give replies which are at variance with the received principles of our religion, and that, too, is equally sinful. But to bring the matter at once to a point, I ask plainly, do you believe in God, and in the Holy Scriptures as given by God, and do you believe in Salvation through Jesus?"

Sam replied that he "wouldn't say he did not believe in God, but," added he, "not in the God of the Jews, they calls Jehovah. I don't believe them people knew anything more about the real God than the Greeks and Romans did. But the truth is, Sir, that I don't know nothing about God, and I never met with anybody who did. There's a lot of people who pretends to be very wise about it. They drops in here and tells me that God did this for them, and God did the other, but when I ask how they knows it, they becomes right angry, and begins to call me hard names, sayin' I'm a wicked unbeliever, but doesn't answer my question. I should be very glad to meet with somebody who could tell me how he knew it, for if they are right, then I want to believe the same as many good men I know. I would if I could, but I can't do it till I get a good reason. And as to believin' that what people calls the Holy Scriptures came from God to be very plain, I just don't believe it, and I have never met with a man that did."

Here Lester felt compelled to ask, "And do you really believe, Sam, that all those millions who publicly profess to believe the Scriptures are liars or hypocrites?"

"No, Sir; I don't exactly believe that. But I knows they only believes at second-hand, and in their own way like. They explains it all so as to

suit themselves, and when they gets it down to their own weight then they believes. They does, much like the King and the Parliament did when Cromwell was alive—I wish we had a Cromwell just now—for both of 'em said they were for the old laws of England, but they must have understood 'em differently, else they wouldn't have come to such hard blows about the business. So what I mean to say, Sir, is just this—that the believers first puts their own meanin' on the words they finds in the Scriptures, and then they say they believes the book, when the truth is that it's themselves, their own ideas, like, that they believes."

"I fear," answered the Rector, "that there is a great deal of truth in what you have said; but, still, the fact that many men have misused the Word is no reason why you should totally reject it. You are bound to read for yourself, and find out its real meaning. God will hold you responsible for doing that."

Sam smiled at this, and, looking archly up, inquired,

"If I can find out for myself the real meaning, after all the parsons have failed, and while they are quarrelling about it, then I just want to know what's the good of them? And what's the good of high learning if I, being only a poor ignorant shoemaker, can find out all for myself?"

Lester felt that he was trapped in the meshes of his own net, and saw no clear way of escape; remembering, however, that in one of the old books upon the evidences he had met with the statement that "all the vital parts of Scripture" were clear to be understood by every reader, he repeated it, but was immediately met with the quiet question,

"And how, Sir, can we know what parts are vital? May it not be that them Calvinist people up at Carmel Chapel are wrong in the parts they says are not vital—may it not be that, if God did give the Scriptures, the very parts we doesn't comprehend may be the most vital of all? And then," added Sam, "if we gives up that part of the question, I still don't know how I, as a shoemaker, can get to know the real words of God in any case. They say there's an awful lot of errors in the translation, but, as I don't know nothing about the Greek or the Hebrew, I can only depend on other men's words, and they do say we shouldn't do that. At least they says so when they are warnin' the Catholics, or tellin' stories at a missionary meeting."

"Allow me to ask you whether it is true, that, as I have been informed, there is a monthly meeting of persons here in Crosswood, holding opinions similar to those which you have expressed, and at which religious matters are discussed? I ask this because of the readiness with which you have replied to my questions, and your apparent familiarity with such discussions."

"Oh! yes, Sir," answered Sam; "a few of us gathers together and talks these matters over—sometimes other matters too. None of us knows much, but we tries to find out what it is as people does know. I ask'd the Old Rector if he'd come, but he said he wouldn't, that he would't, he wasn't a-goin' to mix hisself up with unbelievers. He was a sort o' ban'box dandy Christian, and didn't nohow like to be ask'd any questions, because he didn't know how to answer them. No offence I hopes, Sir, but some of our people thinks as how all the parsons is afraid to come."

"You will oblige me much," said Lester, quietly, "by informing me when and where your next meeting will be held."

With this request Sam complied, and, in answer to a question put by him, the Rector, at parting, said—

"Yes! I will be present at your next meeting."

LIFE AND TEACHING OF ZOROASTER.

§ 7.—THE PERSIAN "FALL OF MAN."

THERE in the garden stand the pair of pure ones, and what shall Ahriman, the evil one, do unto them? Shall he permit them to go on in peace, or shall he work their ruin? The early nations looked upon it as impossible to believe any other than this, that man had fallen, that he had sunk from a condition of purity into that of the impure and evil. According to the Boun Dehesch, man was the father of man—heaven was his destiny—but he must be humble of heart, and humbly do the works of the law; pure he must be of thought, pure of word, pure of deed, not invoking the Dews;—and such in the beginning were the thoughts and acts of our first parents.

First they said, "It is Ormuzd who has given the water, and the earth, and the trees, and the beasts of the field, and the stars, and the moon, and the sun, and all things pure." But Ahriman arose, and rushed upon their thoughts, and beat down their good dispositions, and said to them, "It is Ahriman who has given the water," &c. Thus Ahriman deceived them and to the very end will seek to deceive. To his lie they gave credence and became darvandes; and therefore are their souls condemned to the Douzakh even until the great resurrection of the body. During thirty days they feasted, and covered themselves with black clothing. After thirty days they went to the chase; and they found a white goat, and with their lips they drew off her milk, and drank her milk and were glad: "We have tasted nothing like to this milk," said Meschia and Meschiane; "the milk we have drunk was pleasant to the taste, very pleasant to the taste," and it was an evil to their bodies.

"Then the Dew, the liar, grown more bold presented himself a second time, and brought with him fruit of which they ate; and of a hundred excellences they before possessed one only was left them. And after thirty days and thirty nights they found a white and fat sheep, and they cut off its left ear: and taught by the Izeds of heaven they drew fire from the tree konar, and they fired the tree, and with their breath raised the fire to a flame; and they burned, first the branches of the konar, then of the khorma, and afterwards of the myrtle; and they roasted the sheep, and divided it into three portions; and of the two which they did not eat, one was carried to heaven,—The bird kerhkas carried it away."

"Afterwards they feasted on the flesh of a dog and they clothed themselves in its skin. They gave themselves up to the chase, and with the furs of wild beasts they covered their bodies. And Meschia and Meschiane digged a hole in the earth, and they found iron, and the iron they beat with a stone, and they made for themselves an axe, and they struck at the roots of a tree, and they felled the tree and arranged its branches into a hut; and to God they gave no thanks; and the Dews took heart. And Meschia and Meschiane became enemies and hated each other, and they advanced against and struck and wounded each one the other, and each went his own way: then from his place of darkness the chief of the Dews was heard to cry aloud, 'Man worship the Dews!' And the Dew of hate sat upon his throne. And Meschia advanced, and drew milk from the bull, and sprinkled it towards the north, and the Dews became strong; and during fifty winters Meschia and Meschiane lived apart, and after that time they met and Meschiane bore twins," &c.

In this legend, as in that of Genesis, we have the history of the first

ancestors of our race. In both legends man is created pure and innocent; but according to Moses he is formed of earth and is pure, because ignorant; while according to Zoroaster he comes from God or God's dwelling, "trailing "with him clouds of glory," and is pure because moral and religious. In both legends the eating of a particular fruit (in the one it is the especial food of the Elohim; in the other it is a production of Ahriman) causes a great change for the worse in the condition of our race. According to Genesis, however, this is the one crime, while according to the Avesta this is but one of a series of crimes committed by our first parents. In both histories man is represented as yielding to the first temptation; and in both, man by his own fault condemns himself to misery; but, among the Hebrews, man sins by disobeying an express command,—and he sins because tempted by a beast of the field; while according to the Parsis he sins against his conscience,—sins because tempted by Ahriman, and sins by acknowledging Ahriman as the author of all good. In the Zend books man is not created for this earth, and all things earthly therefore defile him; as he eats, he loses his spiritual nature, and, as he acquires the mechanical arts of life, he but subjects himself the more to the power of the evil one. According to Moses, on the other hand, man is expressly made for this world; he possesses it as its lord, and he eats of his fruits, and does God service: and if knowledge makes him miserable, it is because that knowledge which is not instinct is, not of God's giving, and therefore cannot be for man's good. In the one legend Ormuzd sends man on the earth as to a place of trial, in the other Jehovah as to a place of enjoyment. This legend then punishes man sufficiently, by making him to feel his nakedness, by driving him out into the briery wilderness of the world, and by condemning him to return to the dust of which he had been formed; but, in that, no such punishment could avail: for the weed-covered earth Ahriman had already corrupted and defiled, and to the earth the pure Ferouer had been ordered but to try his courage and his truth; death, then, could have no terrors for the faithless servant; it could but lead him back to the pleasant odours, the beautiful exhalations, and the heavenly delight of the happy Gorodman—unless indeed some terrible retribution awaited him beyond the grave. Yes it was decreed, that he who worshipped the Dews should suffer with the Dews,—he must sink down to the stench, the corruption and the darkness of the Douzakh.

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXXV.

JOHN OF WESALIA.

JACOB OF JUTERBOCK had declared the fallibility of the Pope; it remained to go one step further before the standpoint of the Lutheran Reformation would be anticipated. This step was taken by John of Wesalia, a man who, about the middle of the fifteenth century, held the responsible office of Professor of Theology at the University of Erfurt, and whose words would, therefore, have great weight and wide influence on matters of Church doctrine. John of Wesalia was the first to declare, not only that the Pope is fallible, but that the Church is fallible too. "That the Catholic Church is infallible," says he, in his work against Indulgences, "is a mere assertion in support of which no "proof, either from reason or Scripture, is advanced." He, too, in respect to the doctrine of Indulgences, supplemented the work of Juterbock, and anticipated that of Luther.

The doctrine of Indulgences was based upon the idea of there being a certain spiritual treasury wherein were stored the "merits of Christ and the Saints," and where the Pope's draft for any amount of those merits would be duly honoured, he being at liberty to dispense them to sinning mortals in the shape of Indulgences. This he was ever willing to do on payment of a sufficient fee. These Indulgences had at first been but sparingly granted, but, as the centuries rolled, and the thick darkness of the Middle Ages settled down on Europe, they were more lavishly dispensed, and ultimately grew into one of the great abuses of the Romish Church. On the occasions of the Roman Jubilees—festivals which, on account of their being so lucrative from all the world visiting Rome, had been increased from one in a hundred to one in twenty-five years—Indulgences were granted in great profusion, and found a ready sale. In 1450, the Jubilee did not attract so many people as the Pope would have liked to see, a sign that light was spreading. But the Pope was sadly in want of money, and so he sent his legates into the various countries loaded with Indulgences, which he decreed should be equally valuable as if the people had gone to Rome, and obtained them there. This extension of the privilege did not, however, take place until 1461. From this time a regular trade in hawking Indulgences was established.

Meanwhile some of the fellow monks of Jacob of Juterbock had been grieved that they could not go to Rome, and obtain the Indulgences. And he, to comfort them, wrote his treatise on Indulgences to shew that they might very well be dispensed with. "We do not read," he says, "that 'St. Benedict, although he passed several years in a cave in the vicinity of 'Rome, was a great seeker of Indulgences; and just as little was St. Jerome, 'who, in a letter to Bishop Paulinus, declares that that which is truly 'commendable is, 'not to have visited Jerusalem, but to have lived a good 'life.'" More than mere hints of their non-necessity Jacob dared not, but John of Wesalia boldly attacked them. The occasion of John of Wesalia's attack was the arrival of the Papal legate in Erfurt, with the Indulgences for sale. His work against them is based upon the very principle which triumphed with the Reformation, viz., that the faith of Christians should be based on Scripture. He throws overboard entirely the authority of the Fathers, on which so much of the Church doctrine of that time was based, "for," he says, "I can say, with Augustine, that my manner of reading other 'authors, be they ever so distinguished for holiness or learning, is, not to 'consider anything to be true merely because they have thought it so, but, 'because by canonical or probable reasons, they convince me that it does not 'swerve from Scripture."* Here, then, was the full enunciation of the reformation doctrine. A vast advance upon the intellectual slavery which had hitherto reigned in the Church.

Of course, neither John of Wesalia nor the Reformers were logical, nor true to their own principles, or they would have perceived that in the right to judge whether the teachings of the Church were consonant with Scripture is involved the right to judge Scripture itself, because, in order to set up Scripture as a standard, you must first settle the exact meaning and value of that standard. In doing this one man's opinion is as good as another man's; to deny this is immediately to establish a despotism similar to that you have overthrown. This is, in fact, what Protestantism has done—it has established a many-headed Pope in the place of the Pope of Rome, with this result, and this difference, that a hundred contending sects have arisen to dispute the

* *Joannis de Wesalia, adversus Indulgentias Disputatio*, Cap. 3. Ullmann, i. 259.

possession of authority. And of them all none are logical. There is, indeed, no logical standpoint between Romanism and Freethought; the Roman Catholic is logical, and the Freethinker is logical: the one says, "I have no right to judge anything, the Church judges for me;" the other declares, with Paul, that he has the right to judge all things. We Religious Reformers, as Freethinkers, take this latter ground; and say, that, by the same rule that Luther, Calvin, and the rest, rejected the authority of the Church to despotise over them, so we reject their authority to despotise over us. We bow to no authority but that of Reason and Conscience, the authority constituted by God.

In the course of a few years, after the treatise against Indulgences was written, John of Wesalia became a public preacher in the Cathedral City of Mayence, and afterwards at Worms, a city destined in a later time to become the scene of the greatest act of Luther's life. That the man who had enunciated the principles already mentioned should have been chosen, argues a vast advance on the liberal side in the Church authorities in those cities. Such, indeed, was the fact, although it was not because the principles were recognised in their true worth, but because he had opposed the Pope in the matter. In fact, the whole of the Rhineland, afterwards to become so conspicuous in the Reformation, was at this time becoming rapidly anti-papal. John of Wesalia had undertaken the office of preacher, with the design of speaking the truth, so far as he saw it, and the wonder is not that he was ultimately tried and condemned as a heretic, but that he was allowed to go on for twenty years unmolested. His outspokenness is astonishing, and that he should have become a popular preacher proves that a strong reform spirit was already existing among the people, which his teachings certainly must have tended materially to widen and strengthen.

We can understand that the clergy would soon become inimical to a man who would speak thus of them: "The preachers of eternal wisdom ought to 'be the salt of the earth. 'But if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith 'shall it be salted? It is henceforth good for nothing but to be cast out 'and to be trodden under the foot of man.' The meaning of which is, that 'if the doctrine of the priests and prelates be not the genuine doctrine of 'Christ, it ought to be rejected and trampled in the dust, so little is it our 'duty to listen to pastors who would feign besprinkle and season us with 'salt that has lost its virtue!'" Here was the right of private judgment declared in all its naked truth. "Rare as a black swan," he continues, "is the 'priest who discharges the apostolical office with apostolical fidelity. And 'the reason is because the Word of the Lord is fettered and cannot be freely 'preached. Tyranny and oppression on every side cry out against it. . . : 'The consequence is, the great majority discharge their office with no other 'view but to feed themselves and not the sheep, and seek to promote their 'own interests instead of nourishing them. Nay, sometimes not satisfied 'with their wool and milk, they flay and wholly devour them." Are there not some, nowadays, whom this cap would fit? Priests are priests to whatever communion they belong.

John of Wesalia was an exceedingly eloquent preacher, and the thousands who came to hear him must have been not a little astonished at some of the things that they heard from his pulpit. Talking of priestly rites and ceremonies, he said of the unction with consecrated oil: "The consecrated oil is 'no better than that which is in daily use in your kitchens." Discoursing on fasting, he said: "If St. Peter did introduce this practice, it could only

"have been to obtain a readier sale for his fish;" again, on another occasion: "When it is said that the Holy Church appointed fasts, and that at these seasons no one ought to take home a wife or celebrate a marriage. These are pure falsehoods;" and again; "The fathers who instituted fasts, if they did mean to prohibit the use of certain kinds of food, certainly did not intend that a man should not eat when he was hungry. As long as he is hungry a man may lawfully eat; and there is no sin in even dining upon a fat capon on Good Friday." One would think it was a modern Protestant and not a Roman Catholic priest in the fifteenth century speaking.

His expressions against the Papacy and the hierarchy were equally strong and remind one forcibly of Luther. "I despise the Pope, the Church, and the Councils, and extol Christ. I despise as a vain mask the name and title, the honour and quality of whomsoever they may be, were it even an angel, not to speak of the Pope, or any human being, provided they do not utter the words of life, but merely vaunt their office and dignity, and pretend that by these they have received authority to ordain what they please. I care not for the two-horned mitre. The shining infula affects not me. I abominate the priestly slippers, decorated with precious stones and gold. I laugh at the high sounding names, the tragic titles, the lofty triumphs. They are mere semblances, and anything rather than the badge of a true pastor, bishop, or teacher, when that is lacking which alone gives them worth, and renders them tolerable." Such are some of the passages he was in the habit of delivering to his audience. Twenty years of such preaching as this, in two of the chief cities of Germany, must have had much to do in preparing people for the Reformation; that it was tolerated so long shows that the power of the Church was already on the wane. It is worthy of remark that Luther carefully studied and greatly admired the writings of this John of Wesalia.

But it may occur to some to ask how it was that, forestalling so many of the principles and sentiments of the men of the Reformation, John of Wesalia was not himself a Reformer. This is answered by saying that the man who achieved the Reformation—grand old Martin Luther—was a man not of words only but of action, which John of Wesalia was not. He had neither the courage, nor the fiery energy, and intense power of work of Luther. Moreover, to be just, let us remember that many influences intervened between his time and Luther's to prepare the ground and open the way. But in the most favourable circumstances John of Wesalia would never have been a Luther. We might not have known that but for the disclosure of character made by the trial for heresy, which John had now to undergo. He fell a victim to the Inquisition in Germany, which, though it had never become naturalised among any of the Teutonic races, had, through the influence of the Dominican Friars, got itself established to some extent in Cologne.

It was in the year 1480, when Wesalia was at least seventy years of age, that he was accused of heresy, and dragged before that dread tribunal. Looking at the particulars of the trial, which lasted for nearly a week, a hasty judgment might accuse of prevarication the preacher who had spoken so boldly. The end of it was, that he agreed to recant all he had said against the Pope, the hierarchy, and the Church, which he publicly did. Let us recollect the man's age, however, before we say any hard words of him. In a man of seventy, worn down by disease, sick and weary, after four days of public debating with merciless judges, it might very well be that, though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. Poor old man, he paid a heavy penalty,

and may be said to have been a martyr after all, without the crown of martyrdom. His books were ordered to be burned: and although the hope of a free pardon had been extended to him he was imprisoned for life. That, however, was not for long, for his mental sufferings at the weakness he had shown in denying the truth, combined with the cruelty of the gaolers, put an end to his existence a few months afterwards, in the year 1481. On seeing his books burned, the old man, we are told, had wept bitterly, and cried, "Must, then, all the truth they contain perish? Such is not thy sentence, O God of Truth." No! it was but the impotent sentence of men, and, despite their efforts, the truth Wesalia taught lived after him to work its work.

JAS. L. GOODING.

THE NATURE OF A MIRACLE.

FROM A LECTURE.

(Continued from p. 144.)

AMONG the numerous questions suggested by the theory of miraculous events, it strikes me as most important to ask, Of what use is a miracle? Has it any evidential value? What good end does it serve, beyond that of benefiting the person or persons concerned? Upon this point, the common practice of Christian writers is to assume all their case requires, but, as a rule, they avoid argument. It is quite possible to assume that in all the instances of miraculous interference—granting, for argument sake, that the events occurred in the precise order and form in which they have been recorded—a person, or class of persons, derived some great benefit. It may be said that, although the Egyptian army and its leaders were drowned in the Red Sea, the Hebrews happily escaped from a great difficulty through this miraculous destruction of their pursuers; that, when the walls of ancient Jericho fell, before the trumpet's blast, although the people of that city were suddenly deprived of their artificial shield, and exposed to the premeditated indiscriminate slaughter, the chosen people were preserved from the dangers and losses which would probably have resulted from a prolonged siege, and a stubborn resistance; and that, when the angel of the Lord smote the army of the Assyrian monarch, the people of Jerusalem were delivered from the jaws of the consuming lion, and were thus secured the chance of repentance, for a short time longer, while retaining their possessions. So, also, of the Christian and Heathen miracles the same assumptions may be ventured, but, in that case, the miracles are of no value to ourselves. To render them serviceable to mankind in the present century, it must be shown that, legitimately, they are to influence our modes of thought, and to furnish data for religious arguments; and it is in the attempt to make them do this that our orthodox writers have pressed them into doing service as among the evidences which are to support Christianity. It is zealously maintained that the Christian religion is proven to be true, because no mere man could have performed the wonderful works which Jesus accomplished. Mr Ilvaine, in his treatise upon "The Evidences of Christianity," dwells upon this point as being of the utmost importance. "Make good," he says, "the evidence that the Saviour, and his apostles, wrought miracles, in attestation of their Divine mission, and the Christian religion, as contained in the 'New Testament,' and taught by them, must be a Divine Revelation."* Simpson argues that, "unless we first prove the historical value of the miracles, we are beating the air in endeavouring to maintain the Christian system of doctrine;" and, in one of his discourses, a modern Hulsean Lecturer says, "I am endeavouring to throw as strong a light as possible upon the fact, that it is the miracles of Christ with which we, as Christians, are vitally concerned: if they be true, our faith is whole; if they be false, our faith is destroyed."† He imitates the early writers in resting all upon

* P. 115.

† Goodwin's Hulsean Lectures, 1855, p. 68. The Italics are his own.

the miracles, and, although many modern divines have found it expedient to abstain from venturing so far, it is certainly the common mode of maintaining the Christian system in the pulpit discourses. But it is altogether valueless. It has not even a shadow of evidential value, and recent orthodox critics—Trench, and others of his school—have been constrained to admit that fact; but, assuming that a man came before us to teach a number of new truths, the working of miracles, to assist his argument, would tend rather to retard than to hasten the progress and general adoption of his principles. As it was in the olden times, so is it now, that the more ignorant the people, the more ready would they be to embrace the new system when supported by miracles, or what seemed to be such. Not knowing either what wondrous suspensions are involved in miracle working, and being equally ignorant of the extent to which works may be done by the forces of Nature, the ignorant would readily credit the miraculous story; but the men who really influence the world, they who, in the long run, are sure of preëminence, the men who understand Nature the best, would be the least disposed to attest a miracle. Not because of any anti-religious scruples, but simply because of knowing that the order of Nature is uniform.

An illustration of this is furnished in the history of the Salt Lake Valley community. The Mormons have not succeeded in gaining over any but the most ignorant portion of the community. It is granted that many of their converts have been won from the middle and money classes; but as wealth and wisdom, knowledge and acres, do not invariably go together, there can be no reason against assuming—what, in many cases, has been demonstrated—that the men of substance they have gained over were, in an educational sense, as ignorant as the poorest peasant. It is quite possible that they had received what is called an education; but, unfortunately, the majority who entered our schools were sent out again without being anything more than merely crammed with a few ideas which, parrot like, they were taught to repeat; they were not trained to use their reasoning powers, or, by processes of thought, to work out solid conclusions for themselves. Thus, although their wealth secures them consideration in the world of business and city-life, it does nothing for them in the world of mind; they are rich in purse, and poor in soul; and while it may be possible for them to purchase the half of Europe, its possession would not secure them against the weakness generated by superstition, or do anything toward lifting them into that sphere in which intellectual manhood and freedom of thought are supreme. With all their gold they are still poor, and as liable to be deluded by the religious charlatan as the red men of the American prairies, or the tribes of Inner Africa.

Unfortunately, in dealing with this subject, we have to do with men who are perpetually shifting their ground, and who modify away the whole soul of their statements, in order to avoid the force of objections, while still adhering to the original conclusions. The celebrated Weston has argued that "our Saviour has left us on record a certain and infallible rule whereby we may judge of the validity of Miracles: namely, the reasonableness or excellency of those doctrines, which they are brought to confirm. So that whenever Miracles are wrought, if ever that can be, to attest a Talmud, or a Koran, a doctrine absurd or contradictory, advancing confusion in this world, or the interests of Satan in the other; derogatory to the honour of God, or inconsistent with his attributes; in all these cases we may be assured that the Seal is counterfeit, and not originally from heaven. And the reason of this is plain, because if Miracles proceed from God, they must confirm a doctrine of the same heavenly nature, entirely free from sin on the one hand, as derived from infinite goodness; and altogether void of absurdity on the other, as derived from infinite wisdom."* Thus our estimate of the value of the miracle is, according to this, to be determined by the nature of the doctrines it accompanies or attests. The latter is to guarantee the validity of the former. And that this was the opinion of the early fathers is now generally admitted. Even Paul instructed the followers of his ministry that they were to accept no other doctrine than that he had preached, not even if an angel

* Weston's Rejection of Christian Miracles by the Heathen, pp. 6-7.

descended from heaven to preach it. No miracle was to be admitted as proving the contrary. The believers were warned to be upon their guard against those who would do mighty works in order to deceive, even the elect, and the test by which their works were to be tried was no other than the purity of their doctrines. Even in the earliest ages of Judaism, the same standard by which to test the value of science and wonders—miracles—was erected. Moses is represented as saying: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not harken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all thy heart and with all thy soul."* This is a clear statement of the case in favour of the idea that the nature of the doctrine must be viewed as determining the manner in which we are to deal with the miracle worker. The doctrine is raised above the miracle, and, consequently, the latter, according both to Paul and Moses, has no evidential value, and the worker is not to be followed until we are satisfied on other grounds of his truth.

Here, then, the question comes up, What can the evidence furnished by miracles be worth? If it be not absolute as an evidence, it must be an encumbrance. All elements that do not conduce to the clearing up of any question, must be omitted in its consideration. And there can be no medium between the absolute and the useless. The supernatural, lying beyond our daily observation, must either come on to bear down all opposition, to render all other evidence useless, and to secure an unwavering conviction; or it has to be absolutely rejected. Unlike ordinary human evidence, it is not amenable to those tests by which the relative value of testimony is determined. If a man were charged with stealing, and George Smith, the tinman, with an angel from heaven, came into the witness box to give in their evidence, we should be placed in this awkward situation—either we should not require to hear what Smith had to say, being sufficiently satisfied with the supernatural witness; or the latter would have to be rejected altogether, because of our not being able to cross-question and discover how he came to know—by seeing, or only by hearsay—that which he came to testify. Thus his evidence would be valueless, because of our being incapable of comprehending how he acquired his knowledge, in which case we could have no certainty that he knew the facts. And, obviously, even the most orthodox of men must confess that "they who are capable of working miracles," the angels, are liable to be deceived. The major portion of modern theology rests upon the assumption that "the heavenly hosts were so far deceived by the prince of darkness that they took up arms against the Highest," and it is, therefore, impossible to assume that they are unflatteringly preserved from falling into error.

It follows, then, from this, logically enough, that Weston is right in representing that it is the doctrine which is to prove the miracle, not the miracle to prove the doctrine, and this position must be accepted, with all its consequences, by those who assert the validity of miracles. Indeed that this is so has been seen by others besides Weston, among the orthodox supporters of miracles, who have found themselves compelled to assert, either in words or in substance, the same thing.

* Deut. xiii. 1-3.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XVII.

GEORGE BARRINGTON.

SHORTLY after the hasty visit of Dr. Moule to Crosswood the old town and the Royal Hotel were roused from their usual quiet by the rattle of a post-chaise, in which sat George Barrington, then returning to ruralise for a time, or perhaps even to settle down, upon a small estate, which could boast of being adorned by a neat and commodious modern-built residence for a substantial country gentleman. He was its owner, for Doctor Moule either had incorrectly heard his words, or had fallen into an error in supposing him to have merely rented it. The fact was that the father of Barrington—who was a soldier of fortune—had married into a family much superior to his own. His valour and personal attractions had won the lady's heart and hand. But her friends were not agreeable to the match—they laboured very diligently to prevent it, and, finding that to be impossible, charitably, and as far as it lay in their power, did their best to make things uncomfortable. The lady had great and solid expectations, but no ready money, and the consequence was that the pair had to eke out their scanty means—consisting only of his officer's pay—so as to make it meet the wants of a young family.

Hard as it was, this was done without murmuring by the wife, but the elder Barrington never forgave himself “for depriving her of those luxuries to which, from her earliest childhood, she had been accustomed.” He had seen foreign service with Dr. Moule and Colonel Lester, in fact they were “chums,” and frequently the purses of the latter were opened to furnish him with necessary supplies. During the lifetime of the love-bound couple the expectations were never realised; but shortly after their deaths, which followed rapidly upon each other, they became fruitful, and then the orphan'd children, four in number, found themselves possessors of £5000 a-year each. In addition to this, and about three years before Lester went as rector to

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES. VOL. II.

M

Crosswood, a maiden aunt of Barrington's, dying, left him her estate, which lay about half-a-mile from the rectory. The fortunate proprietor immediately took possession, and, skilfully planning for himself, set about making many alterations. He resided upon the estate through six months, and then went to town to spend the season, intending at its close to return and enjoy the fruits of all his plans and changes. Instead of doing so he had travelled, and visited his friends, so that the return just alluded to was his first appearance since the workmen had quitted the house. When at Southampton, in the hurried interview he had with the Doctor, he mentioned his intention of settling down at Crosswood, and as the former knew nothing of the aunt's bequest, he concluded that a residence had been rented. Prior to leaving, the Doctor had charged Lester somewhat earnestly to make friends with Barrington—not for any pecuniary or similar advantages, but purely because he would prove to be a first-rate companion, so that when he arrived there was quite a commotion at the Rectory, and Ella was particularly anxious, almost nervously desirous, about discovering if he would prove to be a gentleman worthy of a place in her brother's esteem. Lester himself took the matter more quietly, although strongly predisposed to form a close friendship. He had learnt that Barrington was a man of genius, fond of study; a great scholar, well versed in literature, ancient and modern, and, in fact, a gentleman in every intellectual sense superior to those who form the main staple of country society.

All this was quite true, for Barrington was a first-class man, both in intellect and heart. He had graduated at Cambridge, but without entertaining any definite ideas of the course he was to pursue, whether to enter the army, to become a professional man, or to live at home at ease. Being of active habits and temperament, he could not tolerate the idea of idling away his time, but invariably when sitting down to solve the problem of his future career, of what he should aim at, his cogitations ended in the same uncertainty in which they had begun. Want would probably have quickened his decision; having a good fortune he never felt the necessity of speedily deciding, and thus when he had completed his twenty-first year he was still undetermined. He could not be content with resolving upon living an inactive country life, and yet was equally unable to decide upon adopting either law, medicine, the sword, or the clerical profession, but the balance began then to turn in favour of the latter.

Under the influence of a sermon preached by the Master of his College, he resolved upon reading up for the Church, and his diligence was most laudable, but he never took orders. The reasons he assigned for changing his mind were that there was a want of reality about the profession which shocked his sense of propriety. Whatever he undertook was performed in earnest, and in this instance he was not long in discovering the want of earnestness in those who were preparing for orders. This, however, considered solely by itself, would not have withheld him, had it not been for the matter-of-course manner in which the want of earnestness was treated by the University authorities. It struck him that as neither the young hands nor the old ones were working with a will, there must be something rotten in the whole affair. Having hinted this to some College friends, he was astonished at their wondering he could ever have looked upon it as anything more than a professional pursuit. They cared nothing for religion, because of knowing nothing about it. All the ideas they had were of the formal type, and it was only like Thibetian Lamas that they were prepared to per-

form service. The mere mockery of College prayers now became clear to his mind, and without more ado he set himself the task of studying the subject completely, so as to discover upon what grounds the popular religious theories were erected. The task was bravely undertaken, and unflinchingly pursued, with results which will eventually become clear to the reader. Enough to say here, that he could not conscientiously enter the Church, and although warned by many older heads that he had better avoid plunging so deeply into theological enquiries, he pursued them for his pleasure long after his resolve not to take orders was published.

His course of study gradually widened, for, entering into the ancient histories, he endeavoured to discover the origin and trace the growth of the common religious ideas. All the standard works upon religious philosophy with which from time to time, and at great pains and cost to themselves, scholars have enriched the world, he studied with great care and profit, but in all he found the same want of generalisation from broad surveys, and the same foregone conclusions verbally repeated, without any attempt to furnish proof of their truth. In order the better to achieve his aim of learning what were the earliest modes of religious thought, he resolved upon studying the Sanscrit, so as to be able to read the Vedas and Puranas, and Hindu philosophical treatises for himself, and great was his astonishment at finding in them the same thoughts which he had long revered as purely Christian. From the Sanscrit storehouse he turned away to the Zend, in which again the same truths were set forth. The Avesta furnished him with ample evidence of the Hebrew captivity, for how else, he asked, could that people have been able to acquire and modify so much thought that belonged to the ancient Persians? Without contemplating the enormous amount of labour it involved, he resolved upon translating the whole mass of material, both Persian and Hindu, which he had examined, and had proceeded a great way in his task when his attention was directed to the study of the Egyptian tombs and papyri, in which he discovered far more of the Hebrew and Christian forms of thought than he had found in the former. This led him to travel, and when he quitted his University it was to visit Germany, for the purpose of conversing with Egyptologists before visiting the Nile, to read its sacred memorials for himself. When three years had been devoted to this work, although he had not exhausted the subject, he had accumulated such an amount of material as enabled him to speak positively about the origin of various Hebrew and Christian ideas, and to understand far better than he had previously done the theories of sacrifice and redemption. He returned to England a wiser but a sadder man. Filled with the idea that it would promote the cause of true religion if a candid history of the ancient religious ideas were produced, he set himself the task of composing it, and it must be confessed that if honesty of intention were the chief agent in producing it, he did not lack that desirable quality.

Hitherto his life had been quite isolated, and spent without much of real pleasure. A few years before the time at which he is introduced to the reader he was somewhat rash in his assertions and hopes; he was warm in maintaining that "only a little energetic and reasonable teaching could be needed in order to demonstrate to men the fallacies connected with their forms of religious thought, which," as he argued, "once exposed, would be rendered powerless." And when he was pressed with the argument that such energetic and reasonable teaching had already been supplied by many noble-hearted men, he managed to evade the logical conclusion by assuming

a defect either in the manner or matter of their teaching. His faith in the integrity of mankind was unbounded, as it should have been, but he failed to make those allowances for the power of prejudice which must be made by those who are to operate with that degree of success which their schemes of progress deserve. Time and experience had toned down the heat of his hopes, without operating to destroy his earnestness of purpose; he no longer believed in sudden changes, but was content to work and wait, being fully satisfied that in the end the truths he had adopted would be triumphant.

During the time he resided at Crosswood he had not made many enemies, for, although known as a man who entertained heterodox opinions, his wealth procured him the licence of toleration which was denied to his poorer neighbours. At that period he generally managed to introduce the topic which was uppermost in his mind, and as a rule he gave free utterance to his opinions. On one occasion, when dining at Rose Hall, and the subject of the last Sunday's sermon was under discussion, he declared that the preacher was fully justified, by both the Articles and the New Testament, in maintaining the doctrine of election.

This was rather fiercely contested by a gentleman at table, but Barrington carried the day, and showed himself to be perfectly master of the texts and commentaries. But when asked, did he believe in the theory, he repudiated it with all the scorn of which his nature was capable.

This seemed to many who heard him to be contradictory, and he was asked why he had so earnestly justified the preacher, although so determined in denouncing his doctrines.

His answer was characteristic. "Men," said he, "are to be tested rather by the honesty of their lives than by the completeness and purity of their doctrines. There are thousands who undertake to maintain that which is false, but they do so under the solemn conviction that their theories are worthy of all credit. The Mohametans are earnest in their faith, which is rendered clear by their honesty in trade, and they who denounce the creed must do justice to their morality of action, or little notice will be taken of their speeches. And in like manner, when dealing with the men of our own age and country, we must not confound error in belief with hardness of heart or wickedness of intention."

Such speeches were freely tolerated, but not so those of a political nature, in which he frequently indulged. He had once been pressed, by the Conservative party, to stand for a neighbouring borough, when his answer and expression of radical opinions was so sweeping that he alarmed the deputation which came to solicit him. Not that he belonged to the "radical party," or asked what they asked; his radicalism involved a return to those nobler principles of administration which shock alike the men of all parties, but which would secure to England both strength and moral progress.

Judging from the past, there was nothing in Crosswood to induce him to return; but he had done so under the impression that there he could enjoy that repose of mind which was necessary in order to enable him to complete his great book. The desire to accomplish that had become a strong passion, and many of his friends had been informed that before the close of the next winter the first volume would issue from the press. He little dreamt of the changes the events of this winter would make in his plans, or of the burden of care he was creating to constitute the load of his life. But while he is rearranging his extensive library, and preparing for his meditated labour, we must away to our long-neglected friend Mary, in Devonshire.

THE BRIGHTON ACCIDENT AND PROVIDENCE.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good," says the old saw, and experience serves to shew that the worst of evils are fraught with advantages to some class of Her Majesty's subjects. A murder, which fills a whole neighbourhood with horror, operates quite differently upon the hangman, whose annual income would be very small were no such crimes to be committed. And railway accidents form no exception to the general rule. They cause great commotion, and are the sources of unutterable sorrow, but the medical and other professional men step in to reap their harvest of fees from the field of disaster and death.

A recent railway accident, that of the Clayton tunnel, supplies us with an excellent illustration of this; for, not only the legal and medical gentlemen, but the members of the clerical profession are turning it to account to increase their authority and profits. Happening upon a Sunday, and especially to an excursion train, they have managed to discover in the sad catastrophe a proof of the Divine anger—an evidence that religion is not properly supported in the land. The clergy are placed in the awkward position of men who are benefited exactly in proportion to the fears of their neighbours. If they can identify their prosperity with the cause of God, then it will naturally follow that the people will the more readily contribute to their support. This fact holds out the temptation to them to see in things rather that which they wish, than what is; and is an inducement to bring God upon the stage, to play a part favourable to their worldly gains. Not that they are all conscious of this when holding forth upon Providential interferences, for, doubtless, many of them really believe what they teach. They are playing a selfish part, without knowing themselves to be mere actors; they are professing to possess a measure of knowledge, which a moment's unprejudiced thought would shew they do not possess; and their comparative blindness can only be accounted for upon the well-known principle, that men are apt to discover that meaning in events which suits their personal convenience, and harmonizes with their foregone conclusions.

We have been painfully impressed upon this point through reading the reports of the religious services at Brighton on the Sunday succeeding that of the catastrophe, which, for bad taste, bad logic, blasphemy, and presumption, cannot be surpassed.

Some of the preachers went so far as to inform their congregations that "God has borne witness in this catastrophe that He will not allow His Sabbath to be violated." The collision is the result of Divine anger, and we are to view the whole array of dead and wounded as smitten by Him into their sad condition. Yet still these gentlemen have the unblushing effrontery to set forth that we are to believe in a God of justice and mercy. What blasphemy is this! Nothing more intensely revolting to all pure religious ideas can be conceived than lies in this statement. Does the Divine Being pursue the same course of injustice that is pursued by common untaught men? Is God a respecter of persons, and so much so that, while He allows the high and mighty to sin and go scot free, He selects the poor and miserable as the victims of His wrath? The passengers in that train were not the wickedest upon earth; some of them were little children, some were mere girls, and there were those of mature years which had been honourably spent. They were not bent upon the committal of crime, but only upon returning home, or visiting their friends. What was there in what they were doing which could justify their selection to bear the wrath of the Almighty One? In London, how

many of the high and mighty, the rich and learned, were busy at that time in doing deeds of wickedness which surpass, in their pernicious fruits, all that these sufferers could have conceived! The Bishops, who are as lights set upon the hill, are not celebrated for avoiding employing their servants on the Sundays. Their carriages are to be seen upon the public streets; and, if it be answered that it is a work of necessity when the hierarchs of our Church are conveyed in carriages upon the Sunday, we remind the speakers that Jesus was in the habit of walking, and that Paul did not keep his equipages of ease and luxury. And, besides these, how many of the aristocratic body there are who give dinners, and employ servants to be at their call, upon the "Lord's day." Are we to say that God visits the poor with his judgments for seeking pleasure upon Sunday, but permits the rich and powerful to escape? The hired priest will say so, but we have learnt better things than to accept that theory, and, moreover, we know why he undertakes to speak so unjustly.

Ours is a busy age, and each profession has its times and trials. Sunday is the priestly trading day. The divinity shops are then opened, and, in order to prevent the business from being turned into other channels, the traders unanimously protest against other men enjoying liberty to pursue their calling. They ask that all who are not priests shall be prohibited from turning an honest penny upon that day. What is it to them that a man has been employed all through the week in an unhealthy atmosphere, in a confined shop, and needs the country air to invigorate his frame? They have nothing to do with his body, but much with his soul, and his purse. If he empties the latter into "the treasury of the Lord," which is but another name for "the pocket of the priest," then all will be well, even should he die through the confinement. They have neither mercy nor tenderness, but, with an evident violation of common decency, they deal out damnation unto all who decline submitting to such dictation. Were we to name the peculiar pleasures hoped for in the future by these men, we should not hesitate to say that their desire will be to inflict punishment upon the unfortunates who were compelled to fly in terror from their wretched discourses. Men of the Clay, Cumming, and Spurgeon school would find it to be a perfect heaven if they were employed to heat fire seven times hotter in order to punish Sabbath breakers. Fortunately for mankind the future lies in the hands of the Divine; it is not in the power of the priests. They are hard enough upon earth, where their power is limited; what they would be in some other sphere, where their power would be increased, it is painful even to contemplate. But their day of despotism has passed away, and we can discover no reason why the overturned system of protection should be extended to the parsons now that even farmers are able to live without it.

It strikes us as somewhat contradictory, that while, upon the one hand, a body of men declare that the catastrophe was a mark of Divine anger, a direct visitation of Providence; upon the other, we have men who are calculating the amount to be paid by the railway company in the shape of damages. They who believe that God was the direct cause, who maintain that it was His punishment upon the guilty, must admit that the train having started no human power could have prevented the work of ruin. The juries that shortly will be called upon to decide upon the amount of compensation will be guided by their notions of how far the company is to be held responsible for neglecting to make proper provision for the due passage of the trains. They will not discuss the question whether trains should or should not run upon the Sunday. They start with the assumption that such trains may be run

upon that day. All which they require to have proved, is that proper precautions to prevent a collision were not taken. Thus the question is removed out of the theological and brought into the business sphere. But, evidently, if God, by His special action, caused the collision, no human power could have prevented it, and the company are no longer responsible. It would be an act of fraud to make the directors pay, if the loss of life were not caused by their bad management, or by that of their servants. We believe that they should be mulcted in very heavy damages, and simply because of our conviction that the loss of life had nothing whatever to do with Sunday travelling, but resulted from bad railway arrangements; that if the trains had not been started so closely after each other, or if the distance signals had worked well, no such collision would have occurred. But they who hold by the theory that the fearful loss of life followed from "the determinate counsel and operations of an offended God," are debarred from suing for a single penny, and have no right to cast blame upon the company.

Probably some of the Jesuits of our Churches will argue, as they are in the habit of doing in other cases, that, "although God had decided upon the catastrophe, the human agents were quite as culpable as if they had been the sole cause." This happy discovery of double responsibility is spoken of by many as "furnishing a proud proof of the searching enquiry that has been conducted by the master minds into the minuter details of God's moral government," but unto us it is only a signal instance of how human folly exhibits itself, in dealing with words as though they had no meaning. We cannot comprehend God, but shall be justified in assuming Him to be strong enough to take the responsibility of His own actions. That which He determines to do will be done without any other than human mechanical assistance. The English law wisely concludes that a wife is not responsible for actions done under the control of her husband; for, recognising the fact that the stronger will is sure of the mastery, it views the woman rather as a victim than a criminal. And so in like manner when we contemplate the so-called Providences. They have not two factors. The higher will must control, and thus release the lesser from all responsibility. And if we attempt to punish men for performing actions which God compelled them to perform, we shall be as unjust as if we were to punish a child for breaking a window, although it were proved that its father raised and directed its little arm when dealing the destructive blow.

But, in fact, the whole theory of Special Providences is based upon the fallacy of assuming ourselves to be wise when we are ignorant. He who sees anything done which he cannot explain, rushes to the conclusion that it was miraculous—that is to say, he concludes, first, that by no natural means could it have been done, and, second, that it was God who did it. We object to such abuse of language, because its presumption is most offensive. Who is there now living that has sufficiently mastered the forces of nature, so as to be able to say to what extent their operation can be carried? and who is there to take, without arrogance, the next step, and say that the Divine has specially operated? When we know not how a certain work has been performed it is wisest to admit our ignorance. And when, as in this instance, we know that there were sufficient forces in action to account for the effect produced, it is most scandalous to assume the operation of other causes; and absolutely blasphemous when the "Will of God" is imported into the matter.

P. W. P.

LIFE AND TEACHING OF ZOROASTER.

§ 8.—ZOROASTER AND THE TRINITY.

ACCORDING to the theology of the Persians as embodied in the teachings of their law-giving sage, although the old serpent had unhappily fallen upon mankind, and has thus far gained his wicked ends, he was not to be permitted to triumph for ever; for in the Eternal councils it was solemnly decreed that a Redeemer, a complete Saviour, should appear, who would release the human family from the sad consequences which had been entailed upon it through the errors of the Fall. And here, for the due comprehension of this subject, we must call attention to the fact that the Persians believed in a Trinity. Plutarch, in his *Isis and Osiris*, informs us that "Zoroaster is said to have made a threefold distribution of things; to have assigned the first and highest rank to Ormuzd, who, in the oracles, is called the Father; the lowest to Ahriman; and the middle to Mithras, who, in the same oracles, is called the Second Mind." And Bishop Marsh, in his edition of *Michaelis*, admits that "since John has adopted several other terms which were used by the Gnostics, we must conclude that he derived the Word from the same source. If it be further asked, Whence did the Gnostics derive the use of this expression 'WORD'? I answer that they derived it from the Zoroastrian philosophy. . . . In the *Zendavesta* we meet with a being called the Word, who was not only prior to existence, but gave birth to Ormuzd, the Creator of Good; and to Ahriman the Creator of Evil." In spirit Bishop Marsh may be right, for he makes these three to be the Trinity; and in this concession he is followed by the majority of those who have made this point the subject of their special study—including many eminent Divines, who, in learned, and very costly books, have admitted the truth of these matters. But they are wrong in detail, for although, according to the *Zendavesta*, "The Word was in the Beginning," and was the Creator alike of "Gods and Men," yet He does not take Ahriman in with Him as a part of a triune Godhead. "The Word still dwells apart, and the Trinity is composed of Ormuzd, Mithras, and Ahriman." But the remarkable fact was that a promise was given by Ormuzd, that a deliverer should come who would bruiise the head of the all-deceiving serpent. And this is no modern conception, for it is found carved upon the marbles of Persepolis. In those celebrated marbles there lies the serpent speared through the head by Mithras, and the theological doctrine based upon the victory was, that through this death all things bloomed again in full beauty. And what did all this mean? Was it just so much empty speaking, having no basis of reality, being only the idle dream of madmen, or the self-created delusion of priestcraft? Certainly not so, for it was all astronomical. And, in fact, many of those doctrines which now enthrall the world have no other origin. The sun gained a victory over darkness and Ahriman, that is, the days lengthened again, so that once more all things bloomed in beauty. True, the evil one beat back the sun, and made the earth barren, but again, year after year, the victor sun was reborn, and plenty was restored to the people. It was well so, for thus hope was kept alive, and eventually darkness would be wholly conquered.

There is still, however, a very curious fact, to which the learned Hyde, in his great work on the Persian Religion, has directed attention. He was the Oriental Professor at Cambridge, and besides being the author of several works, he aided greatly in producing our national Polyglot Bible. Thus, as an archdeacon of the Church, and a College Professor, his word stands high;

but, unfortunately for the world, he wrote in Latin, and so the great truths he had to tell are sealed up from the majority of men. He supplies us in his work with the following very remarkable passage from an Arabic work by Abulphar :—"Zoroaster declared to his followers that, in the latter days, a "pure virgin would conceive; and that as soon as the child was born, a star "would appear, blazing even at noon-day, with undiminished vigour and "lustre. You, my sons, will perceive its rising before any other nation. As "soon, therefore, as you behold the star, follow it whithersoever it shall lead "you; and adore that mysterious child, offering your gifts to him with pro-"found humility. He is the Almighty Word, which created the Heavens." According to the Vendidad, the power of this being would grow and grow, until in the battle with Ahriman, the evil one would be conquered, and thrown into fire for purgation.

"Ahriman, that lying serpent, shall, at the end of ages, be purified by "fire, as well as the earth be freed from the dark abode of hell. Ormuzd "and Ahriman shall then, accompanied by all the good and evil genii, sing "the praises of the author of all good and deliverance, even Sosiach who hath "thus delivered all."

To this it should be added, that the Persians seem to have entertained very indistinct notions of this being, for sometimes they speak of him as the created, and at others as the Creator. Sometimes as "the ever living eman-"ation of the Word, by virtue of which the world exists;" then, again, as though he were the Word and Ormuzd and all else in one person, as in the following :—"He is himself the living Word; he is called First-born of all "things, express image of the Eternal, very light of very light, the Creator "who, by power of the Word, which he never ceases to pronounce, made, in "365 days, the heaven and the earth." The Parsees in Bombay, even to the present hour, will look a stranger in the face and say that they understand all this, but we hesitate not to confess ourselves unable to do so. The drift, however, is plain, that God, in some way, was to act so as to bring about the subjection of evil, and the positive reign of goodness upon earth.

There is much in these sacred books of the Zoroastrians to which the learned have directed attention. For instance, the Rev. Dr. Wilson in his great work, written to expose the Parsee Religion, and which was published at the Bombay Missionary Press in 1843, speaks of the self-interest which must have ruled Zoroaster's mind, and quotes the Sadder: "Though your good works "exceed in number the leaves of the trees, the drops of rain, the stars in "heaven, or the sands on the sea-shore, they will all be unprofitable to you, "unless they are accepted by the priest. To obtain the acceptance of this "guide to salvation, you must faithfully pay him tithes of all you possess, of "your goods, of your lands, of your money. If the destour (priest) be "satisfied your soul will escape hell tortures; and you will secure praise in "this world, and happiness in the next. For the destours are the teachers "of religion, they know all things and they deliver all men." In connection with this, Dr. Wilson quotes some comments of Gibbon tending to degrade Zoroaster, which comments are based upon this teaching. But why make Zoroaster responsible for what was not written until hundreds of years after his death? De Perron and Guizot have both shown this so conclusively, that not even Dr. Wilson could dispute the fact. And we see, then, by this, that he who could read the originals, and could not find any such passage in them, turned to Gibbon to quote, although Gibbon acknowledges that he knew not a line of them, and could not read them. Such a course may do

well enough for an Old Bailey Counsel, but certainly it is highly dishonourable in a man professing to be a Christian minister. He would not coin a lie, but Gibbon, through want of knowledge of the Asiatic tongue, had coined one, and that the Rev. Dr., though knowing its nature, would pass as good. But even if Zoroaster had taught this doctrine, although we could properly treat it as unsound and selfish, does it lie with Dr. Wilson to decry it? Does not the modern Church maintain the same? Not in so many plain words, but it distinctly urges that unless people go to the temples they must be doomed to the bad place, and when they do attend, they are not allowed to enjoy much peace unless they are liberal in supporting the priest.

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXXVI.

THOMAS A KEMPIS. —

THERE are times in the lives of all men who think,—of all who live a life in any way raised above the mere animal, when they would fain fly from the struggle of existence, when the din and turmoil of this work-a-day world falls painfully on the ear, and heavy on the soul; times when the bravest would willingly lie down, and sleep the long sleep. The world is empty, hope has fled, ambition no longer points the way to new achievements, and mournfully the whole soul of the man is fain to accept, as a dire and dreadful truth, the melancholy falsehood taught by the Preacher of old, “All, all, is vanity, and “vexation of spirit.” The strong man will fight against this, and, by any means, will conquer if he can. Conquest, however, is not always possible, even for the strong. But let the battle be manfully sustained, let such a man learn, if he cannot conquer, at least, bravely to endure; and in this he will find that, if he come not off the victor, at least he will remain unconquered. Some there are, however, to whom this endurance is an impossibility, to whom in such crises of being help is a necessity. Well for them if the help given be wisely rendered, but woe unto them if they listen to the man who would give them anodynes in the place of healthy restoratives. It is at such times that men may be led to seek the wildest modes of escape from the state to which they have come.

Men have rushed into the wildest fanaticisms to escape a state of religious doubt and negation, and some have sought in maceration of the body, and the sternest asceticism, relief for the soul in such cases. And why is this? It is on the principle already alluded to. At such times men become heartweary and sore perplexed, the problem of life is all too difficult of solution, and this God's Universe, and the Revelation of the Almighty One, the Living God, which the healthy soul finds therein, has lost its meaning for them. If a man will be strong, and fight his way through doubt into the possession of such Truth as it is given him to achieve; or, if haply this be for a time impossible, he be brave enough to endure, it will be well with him. But, alas! there are so few who are capable of this, that the history of religion is full of the records of the strange modes by which men have sought escape from this state, which Bunyan has well named the Valley of the Shadow of Death. In this respect, as in many others, the individual is the type of the race. Into some such a state as this had humanity fallen in the latter part of the Dark Ages; and we have, not without a shudder, contemplated the results in the shape of Fraticelli, and other fanaticisms; we have seen Europe madly flogging itself, and dancing the Dance of Death; in short, we have noted a world fallen into spiritual

beggary and ruin, in which fanaticism supplied the place of a lost faith, and superstition had taken the place of religion. We have seen how the Church of the Middle Ages became reduced to a system of Spiritual Terrorism by the vain effort to crush the spirit of opposition, which had grown up as the result of her own degradation, and the attempt of Priestcraft to ignore reason, and destroy liberty. The various fightings against the Spiritual Despotism which had oppressed Europe so long, we have not forgotten to note, nor have we been oblivious of the fact, that the Church's own children had lost faith in her—nay, we have seen them, by consequence of this, on the one hand, vainly attempting a reform within; and, on the other (as the only practicable course), opposing her power, and condemning her authority.

For centuries the work of opposition had been going on, and the faith of the people had thus been, to a great extent, destroyed; but, as yet, nothing was substituted in its place which appealed to the sympathies of the people at large, and so poor humanity had sought relief in one way and another strange enough and sad withal. Mankind cannot remain in a mere negative state; it must have something to believe, and if religious truth be not forthcoming then superstition will take its place. A way out of this age of doubt, denial, fanaticism, and superstition, was necessary before the Reformation was possible. The positive and practical elements of the new phase of religious development, which was effected thereby, must appear and do their work among the people. These we find in the teachings of the Mystics, who flourished during the fifteenth century, in Germany. Commencing with Thomas à Kempis, we propose now to inquire into the character of the Mysticism taught by them, and the services rendered by them to the Reformation. The Rationalism, which had grown up in the Schools, as a consequence of the contest between Reason and Authority, had paved the way for the Age of Doubt, the characteristics of which we have been looking at in previous papers. Thomas à Kempis was the first voice of power to call the age to a sense of a new religious life.

Thomas à Kempis (so called from the name of the town where he was born, his family name being Hamerken) was a native of the little town of Kempen or Kampen, pleasantly situated on the Rhine not far from Cologne. The son of working people, his father being a mechanic, he was early inured to hardship, but learnt to accept his lot cheerfully in the example set before him by his parents. His mother, we are informed, was distinguished by her piety, and to her teachings, doubtless, must be attributed many of the after-developments of the religious spirit in Thomas. There can be but little doubt that (as with so many other men who have left their mark on the world) something of his future character must have been evident in the characteristics of the boy. Though very poor, and in all probability illiterate, his parents seem to have felt that there was something in their son which fitted him for a higher vocation than theirs, and that it was their duty to make him a scholar. The decision was probably not arrived at without much serious consultation and anxious thought, for they knew that in adopting this course they must look for aid to the liberality of others.

In the end, however, it was determined that Thomas, now at the age of thirteen, should proceed to the town of Deventer, not far from Kampen, and seek admission into the school established there by the Brothers of the Life in Common. These were a brotherhood of religious laymen, who had, under the guidance of Gerhard Groot, retired from the world and lived a semi-monastic life, in what they called brother-houses. They were a sign of the

times, being the result of the religious want felt in that age when men had lost faith in the Old Church, and the priesthood and the monks outraged by their vices the moral and religious sense of the people. In these brother-houses we find assembled, soon after their institution in the fourteenth century, those men, who in the earlier and purer days of monasticism, would have been monks, but, who in these degenerate days, withdrew themselves alike from the Church and from the world. As at once a reaction against, and calculated to become a scandal to, the vicious and sensual monks, these brotherhoods soon earned their hatred, but as they cherished no apparent heresy, the Church did not interfere. And so the institution of the Life in Common flourished in Germany, and into these brother-houses we find most of the real religion of the time, not in active opposition to the Church, congregating, seeking there what the Church could no longer provide for the religious soul.

It has been said with some truth that all men are born either Aristotelians or Platonists. A rough and ready generalisation of the men of thought in all ages into two great classes would doubtless give us the division into reasoners and poets, the men of logic, and the men of imagination. This distinction is found to obtain in all the spheres of thought. So in religion, we find among men the religion of the head and that of the heart. The one produces the theologian, the man who speculates, dogmatizes, and seeks to concrete religion into a system: the other the mystic, who is led by his feelings and emotions, and for the most part abhors the trammels of theology. Where, however, theology divorces itself from reason, as in the hands of Priestcraft it ever has done, the religion of the head will lead the honest enquirer into Rationalism, more or less pure. We have already seen that this had arisen as a reformative influence in the Church, doing its work in the shape of hostility to the Church and theology of Priestcraft. On the other hand, the religion of the heart had been making itself felt as antagonistic, both to the rationalism of the Schools and the formalism of the Church. But it was in the brotherhoods of the Life in Common that it found its first expression in the shape of an institution, and their houses became the real home of Mysticism in Germany.

At Deventer the young Thomas à Kempis, a born mystic, would find himself surrounded by all those influences which would foster into strong feeling all the religious emotion pent up within him. A few years of training under the brothers prepared him for that life of religious contemplation which for ninety years he lived on earth, and which, although not destitute of works productive of a marked effect on his age, yet from its sameness is entirely free of incident. He lived, he thought, he wrote, and died; in these words is summed up the biography of this quiet soul. After passing seven years in the school and brother-house at Deventer, Thomas, under the advice of the aged Florentius (successor of Gerhard Groot, as the director or spiritual father of the brethren) entered the newly-formed convent of St. Agnes, near the town of Zwoll, which had been instituted by Groot. Here, as a monk, or, more correctly, a canon-regular, in quiet industry of transcribing and composing books, in lonely contemplation, and in secret prayer, the long life of this man passed away, every day like unto that which preceded it in its uniform round, but still not without results, which it will be our business in succeeding papers to pourtray.

Before dismissing the subject of the brotherhoods of the Common Life, it will be proper for a moment to call attention to the services they rendered to

progress. We pointed out to our readers in one of the earliest of this series of articles, that the light first dawned upon Europe by means of the establishment of schools by itinerant scholars, who brought with them the learning gained in the Moorish schools at Cordova, and elsewhere, in Mahometan Spain. We also pointed out how the Church, being unable to stop the new movement, thereupon sought to make it her own, and how, out of this, the Schoolmen and scholastic philosophy grew up. The intellectual movement thus became restricted to the Universities and great seats of learning, and the common people remained in the same gross darkness and ignorance as before. Had this not been so the power of the Church of the Dark Ages would not have continued so long as it did. Now the brothers of the Common Life were the first to establish schools for the people, where the brothers not only provided education but also subsistence for the poorer students; we have a case in point in Thomas à Kempis himself, who, but for these brotherhoods, would have remained an ignorant mechanic; and, doubtless, there were thousands of others who through these received the means of knowledge, who otherwise would have remained in ignorance all their lives. The education of the common people was therefore one mighty service rendered by these brotherhoods to Germany, and by thus spreading light they must be looked upon as one of the efficient causes of the Reformation. They were the first, also, to introduce the use of the ordinary language of the people into the religious domain, and thus struck at the root of that power which the Church derived from surrounding its services with mystery, the mother of superstition, by using a language the people at large were incapable of understanding. The aid they incidentally rendered to the Reformation through the Mysticism which grew up among the brethren, has yet to be seen. To them, too, was owing the growth of a new Theology, the character of which we shall look at hereafter, and which had much to do with the religious aspects of the Reformation. Throughout the fifteenth century these brotherhoods flourished, but towards the beginning of the sixteenth they began to decline. They declined because the age had outstripped them, had taken all they had to give. But in searching out the sources of the Reformation we should not forget that they did a necessary work, quietly and unostentatiously, but thoroughly, and with wide and permanent effect.

JAS. L. GOODING.

THE NATURE OF A MIRACLE.

FROM A LECTURE.

(Concluded from p. 160.)

DEAN TRENCH, with some modifications, takes the same position. He says: "A miracle does not prove the truth of a doctrine, or the divine mission of him that brings it to pass. That which alone it claims for him at the first, is a right to be listened to. It puts him in the alternative of being from heaven, or from hell. The doctrine must first commend itself to the conscience as being good, and only then can the miracle seal it as divine. But the first appeal is of the doctrine to the conscience, to the moral nature in man; for all revelation presupposes in man a power of recognising the truth when it is shown him,—that it will find an answer in him; that he will trace in it the lineaments of a friend, though of a friend from whom he has been long estranged, and whom he has well-nigh forgotten." * The line drawn between the good and the Divine—the

* Trench on the Miracles.

conscience answering for the former and the miracle for the latter—is intended to be accepted as a sort of apology for the preceding concessions. It is the Dean, not the reasoner that draws it. For, obviously, the whole weight of the matter rests upon the conscience part of the transaction. And, although denying it, it is evident that the author was merely reasoning in a circle. The doctrines are called upon to bear witness to the miracles, and then the miracles are brought forward to support the doctrines. There is no thoroughly independent support, and, in fact, such support is not to be obtained.

But if when a miracle is wrought, in order to attest the truth of a declaration which has been made, we are compelled to fall back within ourselves to test by the power of Conscience and Reason the nature of the doctrine, and succeed in our attempt, nothing more can be needed. He who, through the proper course of study, has come to know that the square of twelve is 144, cannot be made to know it better by the descent of an angel from heaven. The latter opens a new question, which has no connection with the former. And if it be true, as all orthodox writers confess, that the working of great miracles will not justify those who see them in denying the existence of God, or anything else against reason, it must follow that, as Christian evidences, miracles have no value; and that holds even when it is for argument sake conceded that all the events happened in the order, and according to the forms, set forth in the four gospels.

And it would be extraordinary if this were not the case. Although it may not be thus intended, it is certain that there can be no greater mockery of humanity than to inform a man, who knows anything of the wonders of creation, he must solve a supernatural problem before he can become certain of a moral or religious duty; which, in truth, is what they say who maintain the theory, that miracles are to be taken as Christian evidences. Practically they declare that a man must determine whether it was God or the devil who performed, or gave power to some person to perform, some particular work. If I saw a ship dashed to pieces it is evident that, supposing the event to have had a supernatural origin, it is not within my power to tell which of the two competent Powers did it. And, when we look at some of those which are called historical miracles, the same difficulty occurs. That, for instance, of the drowning of the Egyptians is open to two interpretations. Granting, for the moment, that it actually occurred, would not the Egyptians conclude that it was an Evil Power which had operated against them? Their learned men would have argued that it could not have been the work of God, because, had He designed to preserve the Hebrews, He could have gained His end without destroying their pursuers. And if the prophets of both nations had come together to decide the question by means of argument, in what way would they have proceeded? No demonstration could be furnished, there could only be Opinion, and, in that case, it is absurd to suppose that actual blame attaches to error. Fortunately, the moral government of this world is carried on upon nobler principles, and the deeper laws do not plunge humanity into such profound abysses of negation. We are rendered capable of discriminating between right and wrong, abstractly considered, without reference to decisions between supernatural powers; and, if we are but candid enough with ourselves to acknowledge that fact, much of the presumed mystery and obscurity of religion will become clear as the noon-day sun, and we shall confess that it was from our fancy, not from the order of Nature, that they had their origin.

It has been frequently declared that miracles are impossible, but more frequently that it is impossible to prove them. With all its faults, the latter is a far more reasonable assertion than the former, as, undoubtedly, it is the more modest to be delivered as an opinion. He who says that miracles are impossible must mean that the order of Nature cannot either be suspended or changed; which is far too bold a statement for any one to make, who is at all conscious of the wonderful phenomena of life, or who has closely read the stone tablets of geological history. I believe that miracles are possible, because of finding myself capable of conceiving of their being wrought. Neither does it lie within the compass of human reasoning to

demonstrate their impossibility. Shall we presume, without having comprehended Nature in all her manifold forms and modes of being, to lay down a positive line which cannot be crossed? I do not understand the whole, and, consequently, I dare not pretend to limit it. There are heights and depths of being and action which hitherto have not been explored—shall we venture upon dogmatizing in relation to them? And, if that would be unwise, how much more so would it be were we to fix limits to confine the sphere of Divine operation? Far be it from me either to descend to that folly, or to mount to that presumption. I can recognize the conceivability, and, hence, the possibility, of miracles; but, while doing so, I also maintain that, previous to declaring any particular event to be miraculous, it is necessary to comprehend the history and form of the event in all its details.

At the first blush this latter seems to be a mere truism, for who will say any other than that we are bound to make ourselves sure about the historical correctness of the narratives in which we solicit mankind to believe? At least, this is stoutly maintained by every Christian author who has applied himself to study the miracles of Hindostan. It is, of course, known to my hearers that the Hindu religious authorities are particularly clever in arguing for the general acceptance of their Sacred Books, with all the rites and ceremonies they inculcate, and this upon the assumption that the "mighty miracles" recorded in them are veritable accounts of events which occurred in the order and form of their narration. And, assuredly, if the miracles imputed to Rama, and Vishnu, and other Divine personages, who are believed by the Hindus to have appeared in the human form, were performed by them, it will be difficult to induce men to believe otherwise than that the Hindu form of faith is worthy of universal acceptance. This will not be denied by any orthodox man; and hence it comes that all who touch upon the subject take the high ground of denying that there is any truth in the narratives. And, when the natives object to that destructive mode of proceeding, they are advised, and rightly so, to be particularly careful in examining both into the historical credibility of the books in which the said events are recorded, and then into the nature of the occurrences, before undertaking to pronounce them—as miracles—worthy of the general assent. There is a great deal of candour exhibited by those authors when dissecting the narratives, and, although the natives are displeased, there can be no doubt that the criticism is both honest and destructive. But the same method must be applied when other than Hindu miracles are brought into question. With whatsoever measure we mete unto men, with the same shall it be measured unto ourselves. Lying balances are hateful, no matter whether it be sugar or truth we are weighing. And, if it be demanded of the Hindu that he shall submit the history of the miracles in which he believes to the most searching scrutiny, it cannot be contended that he is not to do the same by those in which we ask him to place confidence. He demands, and we are bound, as searchers after truth, to concede, the point. Once refuse it, and the decision will be tantamount to saying, that we measure the faith of other men by a severer standard than we allow them to apply to our own.

With shame be it confessed that such is the course of conduct pursued by our Christian leaders and apologists; for they will not tolerate that the same severe method of criticism shall be applied to the Biblical miracles, or unto those of the "New Testament." The men who have been so intensely hated, and bitterly denounced, because of their Freethought comments upon them, have done no more, have used no other weapons than those employed by the Christian teachers when dealing with Hindu and Mahometan believers. From the days of Julian down to those of Chubb and Toland, and then, again, down to the days of Strauss and Parker, no other course has been pursued by the Freethought critics than that of carefully examining the history of the records, and the nature of the events recorded, so as to discover if they are worthy of credit; and then, when it was found to be impossible to refute their arguments, or to furnish other evidence in support of the popular belief than that which they had examined, recourse was had to invective and slander in order to destroy their influence. Precisely the same course which the Hindu pursues, in order to prevent the Christian missionary

from gaining the attention of his countrymen, has been pursued by Christian apologists when dealing with those who employed the same arguments at home. But, whatever may be the amount of injustice such men in their blindness are ready to deal out to us, it is obviously our duty to bear and conquer it. Either we must do so, and go on to search after the truth; or we shall fall into the Hindu condition of believing without reason, and of assenting without having inquired into the nature of the evidence. There is no middle course for our choice; and, if I am anxious in insisting upon the necessity of examination, it is simply because of feeling its high importance, and how necessary it is to avoid the difficulties which lie in the path of true religion.

But be it remembered that I no more doubt the possibility of miracles, than I doubt of my own existence. That is, of course, understanding a miracle to involve a change in the course of Nature, or the immediate violation of its laws. It has been urged that, if the sun stood still, the consequences would be fatal to the entire universe. It would be so if no sustaining power were interposed, but I am not prepared to assume that the Divine power would fail in preventing such a catastrophe. Say that He orders such a suspension of action, it is not difficult to conceive that He may secure obedience to His command without infringing upon the integrity of the course of other planets and suns. I believe in the possibility of His doing so, and, therefore, find no difficulty in conceiving it. But it is quite another thing to believe that it has been done. A man has a friend whom he loves as the apple of his eye, and in whose integrity he places unbounded confidence. Is it impossible for him to be deceived? Does it not lie within the range of conceivable events that the supposed friend may turn out to be a deadly enemy? It is suggested to the confiding man that he in whom he places such implicit trust has deceived him, and he immediately demands the proof. Confessing that such a thing is possible, although, as he believes, highly improbable, he demands evidence such as will convince him of the duplicity. And so with the miracle of the sun standing still, the physical possibility is to be conceded, but the historical credibility remains to be established. I do not accept the Joshua miracle, simply because the latter condition has not been complied with.

But that miracles, in the sense of violations of the laws of Nature, have been wrought, we have evidence. There was a time when neither animal nor vegetable life was known upon our planet, when, through the intense heat, neither could have existed. This fact will not be questioned by any who are at all familiar with the physical history of the earth, as it has been revealed to us by the geologists. And, being admitted, it will follow that the order of Nature was interfered with, when those new forms were introduced. And, if it be contended that each stage in the geological process involved the introduction of a new order of beings, then, in each case, the order of Nature was interfered with, and a miracle was wrought. But in what way wrought who can tell? Indeed it is best to get rid of the term "miracle" altogether, because it presupposes us to possess a certain amount of actual knowledge in relation to the subject, which, in truth, we have not. All that we can know is that the order of Nature was, in some way, suspended, or interfered with. And we know this upon the best of evidence, as well, also, that the changes were worthy of the Worker. But where are we to find similar evidence in favour of the historical miracles, Hindu or Christian? We admit, for argument sake, the possibility of all which has been suggested by their apologists, but deny the probability; and, before changing our position, we expect to be supplied with evidence shewing that those histories are credible in which the wonderful events have been recorded, and shewing also that there was some reasonable and sufficient motive for, some great and worthy end to be achieved by, the events themselves.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EARLY MUTTERINGS OF THE STORM.

SO MUCH has already been written about the varied and exquisite scenery of North Devon, that by the observing tourist, who appreciates the value of time, and understands vexation of spirit, nothing remains to be said. Why should the modern reader, who cannot find time for perusing the books that ought to be read, be called upon to make his way through minute details which he has read before, or why be taxed with fresh descriptions of Exmoor, Dartmoor, or the glorious scenes presented by the bays and sunny inlets of the coast line, when, in above a hundred books, every nook and cavern, every bay and headland, has been described in words many of which are worthy of their theme? Far be it from us to be guilty of such an act of folly, and yet how is it possible now that, in the course of our tale, we are returning to the fortunes of the long-neglected betrothed of Lester, the beautiful Mary, to avoid dropping a few hints about the scenery around the village in which, with her invalid aunt, she had taken up her residence?

The medical advisers of Mrs. Durton had unanimously agreed that the only chance of her restoration to health lay in her removal from the home in which a thousand objects constantly brought to mind the memory of those dear ones who, in their hours of exuberant joy, had so suddenly found a watery grave at the mouth of the Tavey. In obedience to their advice, the invalid, and her constant attendant, took lodgings in the large and neat village of Mattacombe, where both inland and marine scenery could be readily reached, and no finer specimens of either were to be met with in England.

All around, whether in the fields or upon the downs, the ridges of rock burst through the soil, just as if Mother Nature were desirous of letting her children see something of the nature of her ribs and joints. Sweeping far away inland was a glorious succession of broad platforms of velvet green, upon

which the myrtle blossomed, and roses, clustering round the white-washed cottages, bloomed in wild luxuriance. For some distance the tree-growth was scanty, but ample amends were made by the noble hedgerows garlanded with flowers, and the sweet-smelling myrtles, which grew as large as trees; but when the eye glanced far away into the distance there rose a lofty range of hills, linked to each other by gentle undulations, all bearing upon their crowns innumerable giant trees, which, as the twilight gathered in, and the wind swayed their massive tops, seemed like mountain spirits who had charge of the intervening vale of life and beauty that stretched away from their roots to the bold cliffs which overhung the sea.

And what a prospect it was from the summit of those cliffs! Far away, over the blue waters, the white sails filled out with the wind, like the wings of some new mermaids of the ocean, called up thoughts too big for words, and although gazed upon in the times of calm unheaving quiet, too solemn for ordinary conversation. From one spot the eye ranged over a vast expanse of rocks and sand, the former of which, thrown into fantastic shapes, looked like the jaws of horrid sea-monsters whose delight it was to destroy and swallow up the humble fisher's skiff or the mightier armaments of war. Even in calm hours, when their snaky folds were covered with sea mosses, there was a strange terror in their rugged aspect; but in the hours of storm, when the blasts were unyoked, their aspect was truly terrible. When a stiff south-wester blows, then all these rocks, roused from their slumber, become busy champing and churning the mighty rollers and big waves into snow-wreaths which fly high in air and then sweeps with such violence inland that the spectator is fain to lie his full length upon the cliff, holding on by bank and bush, lest he, too, should be borne from the spot by the unyielding spirit of the storm.

From another spot, and overlooking a vast expanse, where the sea had formed a bay, there was another kind of scene. Right away to the opposite range of cliffs was an undulating sheet of yellow, not sand, but wholly composed of shells, which lay fathoms deep, in every variety and form, to be ground, by the roll of the rising and falling tides, into powder. At times a party of visitors were to be seen walking over them, intending to pick out specimens, but ere they had gone far they had to cast away the earliest of their choice, until at length, amid the profusion, they found it difficult to make a selection. Crunching and rolling beneath their feet, this immense collection of shells called up thoughts of the infinite world of life and beauty, of which they were but the wrecks, and as each tide, washing them up from the cavernous bed of the ocean, brought in a new layer, the mind of the beholder was filled with wonder that so much skill and wisdom should have been displayed by the Great Maker, when, apparently, the only result was a heap of untenanted homes left to change into shell-sand upon that open coast.

Mrs. Durton and Mary were comfortably lodged, and during the earlier months of their residence, there were many reasons for hoping that a positive recovery was to be anticipated. As time wore away, however, these faded, and, indeed, the invalid was compelled to abandon all her easy outdoor exercises. Still Mary attended upon and nursed her with the affection of a daughter, and although there were times when she inwardly mourned over the postponement of her marriage, upon the whole she was content with her lot, and happy in the performance of her duties. Although we have not mentioned the fact, the reader will have been aware that all along loving letters were passing to and fro, in which the affianced ones spoke of the future with-

out dreaming that it could be overshadowed by care and encompassed with danger. The letters of Mary were alike rich in tokens of her affection, and in descriptions of the scenery around her home; but while speaking with a child-like joyousness of the caves and sheltered nooks upon the coast, in which the arbute and *larustinus* grew like trees, she scarcely ever failed to introduce some reflections upon the wondrous Architect of the Universe, the parts of which gave her so much delight. Hers was a pious and devotional nature, running over with tenderness and trust; and it is sad to reflect upon the fact that while penning her love-fraught letters, which abounded with hopes of the future, the Fates were busy weaving the meshes of a sorrowful web, from whose hold, to say the least, her eventual escape would be difficult.

She had recently made a new male acquaintance, and the reader, not without marking well his whole manner, must also become acquainted with him. Not that there was anything either in his life, aims, or thoughts, which happens to be worthy of that honour, but because of the influence he exerted upon the fortunes and happiness of those personages whose life-history is here being narrated.

The Reverend George Bridling—the gentleman alluded to—was a man of great verbal piety, who scarcely ever went out without a stock of tracts in his pocket, to distribute to the poor. These stray leaves served the double purpose of gaining him a good name as a religious man, while they saved his purse by relieving him from the necessity of giving alms to the needy, or small pecuniary rewards to those who went his errands, or carried his parcels. No man stood more in need of servants than did this gentleman, for he was continually calling some one to do his bidding. Instead of paying in carnal food, he gave spiritual bread, and never without dwelling upon the higher value of the latter, which he said was not properly esteemed by the people. The tracts cost him nothing, for he begged them of those who were in the habit of keeping a supply, and sometimes when he asked for a bundle, the good-natured souls presented him with a sovereign, or even more, to purchase a supply. They “were sure that he would make good use” of a larger number than they had on hand; which probably he would have done, but somehow his memory failed him in such trifling matters, for he never made a purchase from the agents. He had enough given him to serve his purpose, and the tract money went for kid gloves, cravats, or elegant boots.

For some years this gentleman had been diligently looking about for two treasures—a rich wife and a good living. He had once been employed as a Curate by the Vicar of Mattacombe, during his absence upon the Continent; then for some months he served in the same capacity at Boltsunder, near Croaswood; after which he engaged for six months at Moul, and just when the time for which he had been engaged expired, the health of the Vicar of Mattacombe again failing so seriously as to necessitate his return to Italy, Bridling was offered a re-engagement in the capacity of Curate. For some days he hesitated about accepting the offer, because of feeling that if his employer died, the living was sure to be sold, and, next, because there was little chance of meeting with a rich wife in that neighbourhood. The low state of his exchequer, however, operated powerfully in favour of his giving an affirmative reply, and when he remembered that there was a chance of some rich invalid being smitten by his personal appearance, set off by his studied manners, the letter announcing his acceptance of the engagement was written.

Scarcely was he settled in the vicarage before he began to plume himself

upon having reached the desired haven. A garrulous old servant informed him that there was a sick lady lodging over the way who was very rich, and had not a chick or child to leave her money to, so it was all to be for the beautiful young lady, who, like a daughter, attended and nursed her.

Pricking up his ears at this piece of news, he inquired farther, and found that the two ladies had been lodging there above twelve months; that the invalid grew daily weaker, which was known by her being unable to continue the wheel-chair airings; that the young lady never left her side except to go to church, at which she had not been known to miss a single service; that she never walked home with gentlemen, many of whom had offered to escort her; and, finally, that the amount of money to be left to the said young lady was enormous.

Part of this was true, but how the old crone had managed to glean so much, was a mystery. Mrs. Durton had made a will, in which her property was given to Mary, but how that had transpired, it were hard to say, unless through the solicitor's copying clerk, or some other subordinate. Bridling was so well-pleased with the information, and so certain of success in winning the lady, that he actually presented the old woman with a shilling—a larger amount by one-half, than he had given her during the whole period of his previous residence, so that it was not difficult to understand why the old woman asked at least a dozen persons if the coin were a good one.

On the second day after receiving this information the Reverend George Bridling, in the course of parish visitations, called upon Mrs. Durton, and was kindly received. He chatted away his half-hour without touching upon any serious point; but just before leaving he intimated that, if it were perfectly agreeable to them, he "would ease his conscience by frequently calling to utter words of consolation, and to learn a lesson of patience from one who bore her severe trials with so much fortitude and Christian humility."

Such an offer could not be declined with any grace; and, in fact, although from different motives, neither of the ladies was desirous of declining it. Mrs. Durton said she should feel herself obliged by his calls, not because she cared to have her soul searched by an inexperienced curate, but through thinking that his conversation would furnish a pleasing relief to Mary; while the latter heartily concurred in the wish that he should frequently call, through imagining he would be able to work upon the religious nature of the sick woman. And upon that point she was quite uneasy, for her fear was that Mrs. Durton was not fairly prepared for death. Within a month Bridling was perfectly at home in their apartments, and not unfrequently it happened, that when Mary was absent he managed to bring the conversation round to the matter of the rumoured will, when, to his great joy, he learned that Mary would possess a fortune certainly not less than £12,000, but probably it would come nearer to the round twenty. By dint of continually praising both Mary and the liberality of her Aunt, he elicited all the facts necessary to convince him of the beautiful nurse being no idle speculation, and in every sense worthy of his pursuit. Immediately, without imagining that he had a rival in the field, or that there could be a doubt of his success, he commenced operations, in order, without delay, to secure his prize.

Bridling had been in the habit of viewing his countenance in the glass several times during the course of every day, but never yet had he seen himself as others saw him. Owing to some obtuseness in his powers of perception and comparison, he had fallen into the error of believing his form and features to be perfect, whereas they were the very opposite. Whatever

there was which could be treated as passable in his general appearance, had been so abominably changed and toned down by his attempt to look severely pious, that nothing remained which was either commanding or manlike. His height was about five feet six; figure inclined to obesity; his eyes were a lightish hazel, and his hair, which he wore rather long, was light auburn. His voice was naturally full and strong, but through doing the pious to the aged, and the sentimental to the younger ladies, he had contracted the habit of speaking in a tone which was neither musical nor attractive unto any but the melon-headed portion of the community. Fond of quoting poetry, and bound by his theory, that "piety in speech ensures a rich wife to any deserving curate," he scarcely ever spoke for any length of time without introducing lines from the Psalms, or from some of the orthodox religious poets. Strictly estimated, his conversation was as insipid as his aims were contemptible. There was neither honour, virtue, nor manhood in him, and yet he was a favourite among the spinsters. Mary had generally treated him with sisterly kindness, which he vainly conceived was a proof of the tender passion. At times, however, she had felt inclined to treat him with less respect; that was when he dined with them. He was an enormous feeder, and, as a rule, he never permitted an untasted dish to leave the table. Animalism was her abhorrence, and nothing but respect for his cloth enabled her to avoid a public exhibition of her feelings of disgust. When he began to speak to her in what he intended to be the tender tones of passionate affection, she wondered at his change of manner, yet did not suspect his intentions. It is true that he had come to feel a sort of liking for her, which, perhaps, in such a man, was the nearest approach he could make to love; but as all he said was in the half-business, half-pious tone, she heard, but comprehended him not; and, to his great mortification, he was compelled to admit the thought, that he had a favoured rival. Nor was he long held in suspense, for Mrs. Durton informed him of the fact, that she was to be the bride of George Lester.

Bridling had met the rector of Crosswood, had heard him preach, and, through a correspondence kept up with Miss Margery Poinder, he was kept well-informed of the rumours afloat respecting the rector being an unorthodox man. His observations, with a view to discover the character of Mary, had convinced him that she was so thoroughly bound up with the popular religious ideas, as to be incapable of linking her fate with one who repudiated those theories, and upon that hint he resolved to work, being assured that her affection for George Lester could thus be overthrown. He was upon his guard, however, in approaching the subject, for at first he merely intimated his joy at learning that she was acquainted with the rector of Crosswood, whom he "had met and heard preach." Mary's eye lighted up with joy, for believing that all who knew Lester would love him, she had no doubt of Bridling having much to say in his favour. In this, however, she was disappointed, and when she asked how he liked the sermon, he solicited pardon for declining to answer that question. On the following day she reverted to the subject, but still without obtaining any distinct answer, and it was not until a fortnight had passed away that, after protesting how much pain it gave him to mention the fact to one who was so much interested, he "confessed that the sermon struck him as being altogether at variance with sound doctrine, and better suited for the platform of the freethinkers than the pulpit of a church."

Having thus broken the ice, he poured in a volley of regrets, adding how

much the good, pious people of Crosswood were alarmed about the strange sermons preached by their rector, and then closed up with reading a few sentences from a letter received that morning from Margery Poinder, in which that young lady intimated that—

“The latitudinarianism of the rector has become so marked that, in connection with myself, several ladies have resolved upon remaining away from the parish church.”

Mary heard all this without giving any external sign of her internal agony. Most young ladies would have refused to believe the charge, and so, perhaps, would she, had it not been for the fact that Lester's mother had so frequently spoken with her upon the subject, as fearing that George would quit the Church. All this now came back to her memory, and although for a few moments she succeeded in blotting it out, they had scarcely passed away before, as in letters of fire, traced by some supernatural power, she saw the writing—“Thy beloved Lester is an unbeliever!”

That night it was fortunate for Mrs. Durton that she slept soundly, for had she been wakeful she must have heard the sobbing of Mary, who neither slept nor lay upon her bed to seek sleep, but gave herself up to those passionate outbursts of grief which indicate the depth and intensity of the soul's agony. Towards morning she became more composed, not that hope had chased away the conviction that what she had heard was true, but she had prepared herself to meet with a calmer aspect the difficulties which lay before her. But her mind now became troubled about what it was her duty to do. Should she write and tell Lester all she had heard? Should she merely mention that her mind had been alarmed by vague rumours? The latter course was instantly abandoned as unworthy, for as yet she had never stooped to equivocation or deceit, and could not now begin. Days passed and she wrote several letters, none of which were despatched, some were “too cruel,” some “too kind.” Probably weeks would have been allowed to escape had not a letter from Lester reached Mrs. Durton, in which his alarm was expressed that Mary was indisposed. A full fortnight had passed without his receiving any letter, and unless he heard by return of post he should be compelled to visit Mattacombe to obtain the necessary information.

The worthy woman, astonished by the contents of this epistle, questioned Mary as to her reasons for not having written with her usual regularity, and then learnt, for the first time, in what way Bridling had been the active cause of mischief. Older, and having more experience—recalling also to mind various conversations he had held with her about the future prospects of Mary—she at once divined that he aimed at supplanting Lester, and with this came the idea that his speeches were a foul calumny. But all her arguments based upon that assumption were powerless, for the long-cherished fear had been transmuted into certainty, and probably no evidence short of Lester's solemn denial could have served to restore Mary's peace of mind.

Mrs. Durton declared that Lester was a noble-hearted man, and that were it her case she would not be deterred by his unorthodox opinions from becoming his wife. Mary confessed that were it only for herself she could risk all, and do the same. “But,” she continued, “I dare not, for others would be involved; moreover, my pledge to the dying must not be broken.”

After much conversation it was finally decided that Mary should immediately write to Lester, giving him to understand both what she had heard, and what suffering it had caused her. This was done, but without producing the results which Mrs. Durton so earnestly desired.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRISTNA.

THERE are eminent persons associated with our Christian Churches who imagine that the "facts and miracles and marvellous phenomena" associated in the Gospels with the life of Jesus, are so peculiar as to justify the statement that no other religious system has contained them. This is untrue, as every scholar must know, for the fact is that it is impossible to cite one of them for which no Pagan parallel is to be found. One of the strongholds of those who make the statement, is what is commonly known as the "Transfiguration of Jesus," but it also has its parallels. In spirit it is related o'er and o'er again in the Greek Mythology, but apart from that we have very close resemblances in the Hindu System, to one of which we shall here invite the attention of our readers. It forms the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita, or "the Sacred Poem," one of the most ancient of the Sanscrit books.

To render the meaning clear to our readers, it is necessary to premise that it forms part of a conversation between the incarnate God—Christna—sometimes called "the Holy One," or "Vishnu," and the Prince Arjuna. In the preceding passage the Holy One has been explaining the nature of Devotion to the Divine Virtues. It thus proceeds:—

ARJUNA spoke.—My delusion has been dispersed by the words which thou hast spoken for my good (concerning) that highest mystery called the Adhyatma. For I have heard at full length from thee, O thou whose eyes are like lotus-leaves! the origin and dissolution of existing things, and also thy inexhaustible greatness. I desire, O highest Lord! to behold thy sovereign form, even as thou hast thus declared thyself to be, O best of men! If thou thinkest that that form is possible for me to look upon, master! do thou, Lord of Devotion! show thine inexhaustible self to me.

THE HOLY ONE spoke.—Behold my forms, O son of Pritha! in hundreds and thousands, of divers kinds, heavenly, and of divers colours and fashions. Behold Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, the twin Ashwinau, and the Maruts. Behold many wonders, which thou hast never seen before, son of Bharata! Here in my body now behold the whole universe in a collective form, with moveable and immoveable objects, and whatever else thou wouldest behold, Krishna! But thou wilt not be able to behold me merely with this (human) eye of thine. I give thee a divine eye. Behold my sovereign mystery.

SANJAYA spoke.—Having thus spoken, O King! Hari (Christna), the mighty lord of devotion, showed to the son of Pritha his sovereign form, gifted with many mouths and eyes, with many wonderful appearances, with many divine ornaments, holding many celestial weapons, wearing celestial wreaths and robes, anointed with celestial perfumes, the all-miraculous infinite deity, with his face turned in all directions. If the light of a thousand suns were to break forth in the sky at the same time, it would be similar to the brilliance of that mighty one. There did the son of Pandu then behold the whole universe, so multifariously distributed, collected in one in the person of the god of gods. Thereupon the despiser of wealth (Arjuna), struck with amazement, and with his hair standing on end, saluted the god by bowing his head, folded his hands reverentially, and spoke as follows:

ARJUNA spoke.—I behold all the gods in thy body, O god! and crowds of different beings, the lord Brahma on a throne of a lotus-cup, and all the Rishis and celestial serpents. I see thee with many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes, everywhere of infinite form. I see neither end, nor middle, nor

yet beginning of thee, O Lord of All! of the form of All? crowned with a diadem, bearing a club, and a discus. I see thee, a mass of light, beaming everywhere, hard to look upon, bright as a kindled fire or the sun, on all sides, immeasurable. I believe thee to be the indivisible, the highest object of knowledge, the supreme receptacle of this universe, the imperishable preserver of eternal law, the everlasting person. I see thee without beginning, middle, or end, of infinite strength, with the sun and moon as eyes, mouths like a kindled fire, heating all the universe with thy splendour. For this space between heaven and earth, and every quarter of heaven, are pervaded by thee alone. The triple world is astounded, O mighty one! having beheld this miraculous and terrific form of thine. For these crowds of Suras turn to thee (as their refuge). Some, affrighted, murmur with folded hands. The multitudes of Maharshis and Shiddhas praise thee in most excellent hymns, crying 'Hail to thee!' Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, and all the Sadhyas, Vishwas, the twin Ashwinâu, and Maruts and Ushmapas, the crowds of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, and Sidhas behold thee, and are all amazed. Having seen thy mighty form, with many mouths and eyes, O great-armed one; and with many arms, thighs, and feet, many stomachs and many projecting teeth, the worlds and I, too, are astounded. For since I have seen thee, touching the skies (in height), beaming with divers colours, with open mouth, and huge glittering eyes, my inmost soul is troubled, and I lose both my firmness and tranquillity, O Vishnu! I cease to recognise the regions of heaven and experience no joy, merely from beholding thy mouths with their projecting teeth, like the fire of death. Be merciful, O Lord of gods! habitation of the universe! and all these sons of Dhritarashtra, together with multitudes of the Kings of the earth, Bhishma, Drona, and yon son of a charioteer, together with our principal warriors also, —hasten to enter thy mouths, formidable with projecting teeth. Some are seen clinging in the interstices between thy teeth, with their heads ground down. As many torrents of rivers flow down direct even to the ocean, these heroes of the human race enter thy flaming mouths. As flies, carried away by a strong impetus, fly into a lighted candle to their own destruction, even multitudes (of beings), impelled by a strong impetus, enter thy mouths also for destruction. Devouring all inhabitants of the world from every quarter, thou lickest them in thy flaming lips. Filling the whole universe with thy splendour, thy sharp beams burn, O Vishnu! Tell me who thou art, of awful form. Salutation to thee, O best of gods! Be merciful! I desire to know thee, the primeval one, for I cannot divine what thou art about.

THE HOLY ONE spoke.—I am Death, that causes the destruction of mankind (already) mature. I am come hither to destroy mankind. Not one, except thee, of the warriors, who are here drawn up in their respective armies, will survive. Therefore do thou arise and seize glory! Conquer thy foes and enjoy the ample kingdom. I also have already slain these enemies. Be thou only the instrument, O lefthanded one! Slay Drona, and Bhishma, and Jayadratha, Karna and others too, strong in war, who are (really) slain by me. Be not troubled! Fight, thou wilt conquer thy rivals in the fray!

SANJAYA spoke.—Having heard these words of the hairy one, he of the tiara, with hands folded in supplication, and trembling, again saluted Krishna, and addressed him, bending with a low murmur, overwhelmed with fear.

ARJUNA spoke.—The universe, O Krishna! is justly delighted with thy glory, and devoted to thee. The Rakshasas flee, affrighted, to the divers quarters of heaven, and all the multitudes of the Siddhas salute thee. And, indeed, why should they not adore thee, O great one! thee, the first creator,

more important even than Brahma himself? O infinite King of gods! habitation of the universe! thou art the one indivisible, the existing and not existing, that which is supreme. Thou art the first of the gods, the most ancient person. Thou art the supreme receptacle of this universe. Thou knowest all, and mayest be known, and art the supreme mansion. By thee is this universe caused to emanate, O thou of endless forms! Air, Yama, fire, Varuna, the moon, the progenitor, and the great grandfather (of the world) art thou. Hail! hail to thee! hail to thee a thousand times! and again, yet again, hail! hail to thee! Hail to thee from before! Hail to thee from behind! Hail to thee from all sides too! Thou All! Of infinite power and immense might, thou comprehendest all; therefore thou art All. As I took thee merely for a friend, I beseech thee without measure to pardon whatever I may, in ignorance of this thy greatness, have said from negligence or affection, such as, 'O Krishna! O son of Yadu! O friend!' and everything in which I may have treated thee in a joking manner, in recreation, repose, sitting, or meals, whether in private or in the presence of these, Eternal one! Thou art the father of the animate and inanimate world. Thou art to be honoured as more important than that Geru himself. There is none equal to thee, and how could there be another superior (to thee) even in the triple world, O thou of unrivalled power? Therefore I implore thee, saluting thee and prostrating my body; thee, the Lord, worthy of praises. Thou shouldst bear with me, O god! as a father with a son, as a friend with a friend, as a lover with his beloved one. Now that I have seen what I have never seen before, I am delighted, and my heart is shaken with awe. Show me that other form only, O god! Be gracious, O King of gods! habitation of the universe! With thy tiara, thy staff and thy discus in thy hand, thus only do I desire to see thee. Invest thyself with that four-armed form, thou of a thousand arms, of every form!

THE HOLY ONE spoke.—I have shown thee that supreme form, Arjuna! in kindness to thee, by my own mystic virtue,—that, which is my splendid, universal, infinite, primeval form, never yet beheld by other than thee. Not by studying the Vedas, nor by almsgiving, nor rites, nor severe mortification, can I be seen in this form, in the world of man, by other than thee, O best of the Kurus! Be not alarmed, or in a troubled condition, at having seen this so terrible form of mine. But look, free from fear, with happy heart, upon that other form only of mine, namely, this.

SANJAYA spoke.—Vasudeva, having thus addressed Arjuna, showed him again his proper form, and the Great One consoled him who was alarmed, by again assuming a pleasant shape.

ARJUNA spoke.—Now that I behold this thy pleasant human shape, thou who art prayed to by mortals! I am composed in my right mind, and brought back to my natural condition.

THE HOLY ONE spoke.—That form of mine which thou hast seen is very difficult to behold. Even the gods are always anxious to behold that form. Neither by studying the Vedas, nor mortification, nor almsgiving, nor sacrifice, can I be seen in such a form as thou hast seen me. But only by worship, of which alone I am the object, can I be really known and seen, Arjuna, and approached in this form, O harasser of thy foes! He who performs his actions for me, intent on me, devoted to me, free from interest, and from enmity towards any being, comes to me, O son of Pandu!

Thus in the Upanishads, etc. stands the Eleventh Chapter, by name—"The Vision of the Universal Form."

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXXVII.

THE "IMITATIO CHRISTI."

At the beginning of the fifteenth century the entire religious mind of Christendom was unhunged; the old foundations of faith had given way. The Church spoke no longer either to the heart or to the intellect of the people. Light had begun to spread, and new wants were experienced. Thought was busy, and men were hungry after knowledge. "Few could read," says the historian, "but they who could, read aloud. Those who could not listened with but the greater avidity, and treasured up in their young and ardent memories whole books. Need was there for reading, listening, thinking all alone, since there was almost an entire cessation of religious instruction and of teaching."* The Church was busy searching out heresies and persecuting heretics; hate was without the Church, and doubt within. And now, when the world of Christendom had thus, as it were, lost its God, there came a voice which told the people that God was not dead, that He was still the Living God, and that their hope was in loving, obeying, and trusting Him. So spake Thomas à Kempis to the world in his book, the "Imitatio Christi." It has been called a new Gospel, and there is some truth in the idea. Christianity came to revive a dead world, and the "Imitatio" served to revive the religious soul of Christendom, to tell men that there was a God above who was ready to accept their worship as men, as His children, and that Religion consisted not in form and ceremony, churches and priests, but in faith and obedience to the Living God.

This book altogether avoids polemics, deals not with the dissensions and doubts of the time. In its first words we find the explanation and evidence of its power: "The kingdom of God is in yourselves. Turn, then, with all thy heart from this wicked world. Wherever thou mayest be, thou hast here no abiding place. Thou art a stranger and a pilgrim, and wilt find rest nowhere save in thy heart, when thou shalt be truly united with God. Why, then, search up and down for rest? Raise thyself, by love, to dwell in the heavens, and regard not the things of this world but as a passer, for they pass and return to nothingness." A teaching with some truth and much falsehood, we will say, but calculated to speak home to the soul of a humanity seeking rest and finding none. We shall presently look at the falsehood of the book. In the meantime we record the fact that it met the want of the age for which it was written, restored faith to a humanity which had lost faith, and enabled it to gird up its loins and proceed on its way rejoicing that it had found God again.

That the "Imitatio" supplied a deepfelt want of the time is shown by its large and wide acceptance. Nay, that its teaching, false and narrow as much of it is, is acceptable down to the present day to men trained in the paths of orthodoxy, is evidenced by the wide reading given to it even now, and the many editions in all languages which the press has poured forth. Thomas à Kempis is perhaps the only name of a religious teacher equally respected among Catholics and Protestants, Churchmen and Dissenters. Pious Catholics read him, and his book had something to do with the spiritual growth of John Wesley. There are several translations into English of the "Imitatio," and the editions are innumerable which, both of the original Latin and the translations, have been from time to time published. Before the invention of Printing the copies of the work numbered many thousands. It was one

* Michelet. Hist. France, ii. 122.

of the books which the printing press first served to multiply and spread abroad. There are two thousand editions of it in Latin, a thousand in French. It has been translated into every European language; the French have sixty different translations of it, the Italians thirty.

The popularity of this book is further shown by the disputes as to its authorship, for Thomas à Kempis has not been allowed to retain the honour unchallenged, although there is no doubt that to him it rightfully belongs. The researches of Dr. Ullmann have set this point at rest for all unprejudiced minds, in spite of Michelet's disbelief, who of course believes a Frenchman wrote it, unless it were the "Holy Ghost." His account of this matter is as follows: "All nations have laid claim to this, the book universal of Christianity, as to a national work. The French point out the Gallicisms in it; the Italians, the Italianisms; the Germans, the Germanisms. All orders of the priesthood, which are, as it were, so many nations in the Church, equally contest the authorship of the *Imitation*. The priests claim it for Gerson; the canons-regular for Thomas à Kempis; the monks for one Gersen, a Benedictine. Many others, too, might advance pretensions to it, for we find in it passages from all saints, all doctors. St. Francis de Sales alone has pierced to the truth of this doubtful matter, 'Its author,' he says, 'is the Holy Ghost.'"* In a note to this passage he intimates his disbelief of à Kempis' authorship. These facts sufficiently attest the widespread popularity of the work.

It seems strange at first sight that a book of devotion written more than four hundred years ago should still be read, and still more strange that a pious Roman Catholic monk should have become the spiritual teacher of the world of Evangelical Protestant Dissent. But Thomas à Kempis in this book of his exalts faith and depreciates reason; and seeing that this is done in Protestant and Dissenting pulpits, and looked upon in "evangelical" circles as a fundamental article of orthodoxy, the facts, at first sight so strange, are easily understood. "Human Reason is weak and liable to err, which faith is not."—"All Reason and natural investigation ought to follow faith, not to precede or impair it."—"Submit yourself to God, humble your mind to believe, and the light of knowledge will be given to you, in as far as it is salutary and needful."—"Of what avail is knowledge without the fear of God? Better the simple peasant who serves God, than the proud philosopher who, neglecting himself, contemplates the courses of the stars." Such are some of the sentiments of Thomas à Kempis; and one feels while reading them that, delivered with a proper nasal accent and a due amount of unction, they would suit the most "evangelical" of dissenting pulpits, and would be listened to by the congregation as among the best of "gospel" truths.

How strange it seems that men can arrive at a state in which they feel that they are doing God a service by depreciating the highest of His gifts to humanity—Reason. We feel that to do so might be pardonable in a Thomas à Kempis, but that in this nineteenth century, which owes its higher light and greater happiness to the right use of Reason, the very men who accept all that Reason has done for them in common with the rest of humanity should be found ready to condemn, vilify, and abuse it, is very strange, but not more strange than condemnable. Do these men ever reflect on what they are doing? do they ever ask themselves whether they are not vilifying the Deity Himself in abusing His creation? Alas! charity would fain

* Hist. France, ii. 109.

believe that they do not reflect, but stern experience bids us remember that Priestcraft is not yet dead, and that this exaltation of Faith at the expense of Reason is one of its means of strength, because a faith that ignores Reason is neither more nor less than superstition.

We declare, on the contrary, that God asks not at our hands the degradation of that intellect which he has given us as a beacon light to guide us to Truth; but, at the same time, we believe that Faith is not without its religious use. Faith has its religious domain as well as Reason. Reason is insufficient to provide for all the spiritual wants of man. There is a Faith above Reason, and religious truths which Reason could never teach us. But the true domains of Faith and Reason never clash. In the well-regulated mind, earnest for truth, Faith cannot obtain power to defraud Reason of her due, any more than Reason will be allowed to destroy Faith; Reason, too, will approve that which Faith asserts, and will thus become the handmaid of true Religion. For example, Reason fails to prove many of the highest of religious truths, shall we therefore discard them? Nay, if the instincts of the soul, if a faith in accordance with reason, assert their truth, and Reason, as it ever will in such case, approve them, then to reject them would be to be unfaithful to our higher nature, and defraud ourselves of a religious benefit. What we contend for, then, is this, that inasmuch as man's intellect is as much a part of man's nature, as much the creation and the gift of God as his soul and spiritual instincts, so no religious benefit can arise from ignoring or contemning either, and no religious teaching can be true which would degrade the Reason. Thus Reason and Faith both have their part to perform in the religious economy. If Reason be ignored, Faith degenerates into superstition; while if the claims of Faith are forgotten, the bases of many of the highest Truths are undermined.

Another point of contact between Thomas à Kempis and the "Evangelicals" of the present day is the teaching, which pervades his system, of the essential depravity of man. "Man's nature," says Thomas, "originally good, was depraved by the first man, and infected with sin, so that, when left to itself, it inclines him to that which is base and wicked." Perhaps there is no teaching of the Churches productive of worse consequences than this, striking, as it does, at the root of all morality by divesting man of his self-respect, to say nothing of its grossly false showing of God's moral government. That this doctrine of human depravity could have obtained the wide acceptance which it has may seem strange to many, and it is worth while for a moment to inquire if there is any reasonable explanation for the seeming anomaly of large bodies of men undertaking to vilify their common humanity. In the first place, we must remember that men in general are easily led by any who arrogate to be their leaders; and so mankind has allowed itself to be led by the priest into believing many things which have no basis in reason. Now, perhaps, there is no dogma to which priests are more attached than this of the universal depravity of human nature, because upon the belief of that rests the necessity of their intervention to bespeak the "grace of God" on behalf of fallen man. In the next place we must remember that spiritual pride is a feeling general among priest-led people; accounted for, in a measure, on the principle that man is ever ready to indemnify himself for any degradation he suffers. The pious orthodox people who are the slaves of a priestly system find a pleasure in considering themselves chosen by God from out the midst of a wicked world, and they take pleasure in looking down on the "depraved humanity" outside their churches

and chapels. Lastly, it should not be forgotten that men in general are not reasoners; and it is quite conceivable that many honest but foolish men may believe there is a truth in this doctrine, from seeing so much vice, sin, and wickedness around them in the world, never asking themselves whether this can be accounted for in a more rational way, and so as to save man's dignity and God's justice, nor stopping to inquire what the logical and practical results of the doctrine are. If they did they would find that this doctrine itself has been the cause of much of the immorality they deplore, by destroying the best guarantee of virtue which human nature owns—Self-respect.

We have sought in this article to indicate some of the more important and salient characteristics of one of the remarkable books of the world; one which has demanded our attention because it took no small part in preparing the way for the Reformation. Through this work Thomas à Kempis moulded in various ways the aspects of the after-time, as will be shown in succeeding papers.

JAS. L. GOODING.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

(Continued from p. 112.)

AFTER the fire Elijah heard "a still small voice" which made him wrap his mantle round him, and bend in awe and wonder. And what was that still small voice—that hushed tone, just loud enough to be heard in the solitude? Was it some supernatural sound which proceeded from the deep heavens, or was it born within himself, as an accusing voice? Did it reproach the prophet for what he had done? There can be no room left for doubt upon that point, at least none when the narrative is considered. All that is here related was intended by the writer as internal phenomena, as figurative fact, true in its deeper meanings and intimations, but having only a subjective reality. It all passed in the mind of Elijah after his flight, and when, as under the circumstances here related, it was utterly impossible for him to avoid reviewing the Past. The great and strong wind which rent the mountain was nothing more than a fitting symbol of the stirring scene through which he had passed, a wind that brake the rocks, tore up the trees, and spread desolation, but certainly not of God; not a wind sent by a Special Providence; the earthquake and fire were only types of the same terrible scenes in other phases, and God was not in them; but then came the still small voice, the appeal of his conscience, rising superior to his religious passions, and saying to the prophet, Truth is not aided on its everlasting march when men take up arms and resolve to promote its progress by means of wholesale butcheries, and God is not worshipped by the shedding of blood. Conscience bade him remember that the slaughter of priests rather increased than diminished their power. The still small voice is heard in every truth-loving soul protesting against the doctrine which makes man to be the standard of faith for his fellow-man, and against the adoption of means unholy in themselves and insulting to the Divinity. I believe that in every instance where intolerance is displayed the voice of conscience enters a protest, but, alas, it too frequently happens that it is unheeded until it is too late to redeem the error, or to avert the evil consequences which invariably follow when the religious passions are unyoked. That still small voice bids us go on in peace with the work of regeneration, ever labouring in mercy, and abiding lovingly in the spirit of truth and brotherhood. The cannon ball rushes away upon its deadly path, shattering that it may reach, and shattering what it reaches, but the power

of some silently-sown acorn proves to be the strongest, for in the end it acquires strength to destroy the greatest impediment which time, passion, or self-interest can cast in its way. Bear up, then, all ye who have in silence and trusting hope sown your seed, and never permit yourselves in the hours of seeming unfruitfulness to despair. There comes one who has a far nobler prospect, judged by the common every-day standard, than you have, one who can boast of a greater following, who is heralded by trumpeters, and who has been the hero of what is esteemed by millions to be an all-embracing and conclusive revolution; but himself and his trumpet-heralds will die and be forgotten when one of the unrespected and almost unnoticed men of his own age will be universally honoured as the greater genius and benefactor. The man who made the first spinning machine was not followed or preceded by trumpeters, nor heard half so much of as Napoleon, and yet we, who are tracing the course of mighty events, know well enough that he who wrought without notice at that spinning jenny did the greater work, and will be honoured through a longer line of ages. And should it happen that you feel roused to do some strong-handed deed, intended to constrain and bind down your fellow-man—if you feel impelled to snatch the power out of an Almighty hand, so to play the persecutor—I say, remember the still small voice of Elijah as a warning and example. He persecuted, but the blood-stains clave unto his own soul, and the Jordan could not cleanse him. Be brave to face the evil, but be not swift to revenge. Look rather to prepare the minds of men so that they shall work rather to secure a better future than to revenge the past. If you could sweep away, by a strong act of power, much of the evil now existing, and could forcibly close the lips of every priest, I would still say, Pause, and remember that in that you do little good until you have raised the people above the desire which gives priestcraft power. Killing a priest is useless—we must raise the people mentally above priestcraft. If Elijah had been content to establish the truths which were in his mind, then he had held his ground, but when he turned to become the foul agent of revenge, the power of his truth was impaired, and in silence he had to bear the reproaches of his heart for injuring a powerful cause.

And there was still another valuable truth to be learned by Elijah while plunged into this solitude. He had gone on believing, according to his early training, that only himself had courage to bear witness to the truth; he had fallen into the common error of arguing that there were none faithful, no not one. The people did not go his road, and he concluded, therefore, that they were utterly depraved and cowardly. Men give themselves up to certain work, and are not so successful as they desire—at once the idea takes possession of their minds that the fault cannot be their own, it must be of the people, and when we inquire, they speak of the degeneracy of the people as hopeless. Go into the various manufacturing, agricultural, or mining districts of England, and inquire what the acknowledged leaders are doing to elevate and improve the moral or physical condition of the people, and they who manage to hinder all progress will look at you mournfully enough, doubting if you are not blind or insane for asking such a question, when all know that naught is doing. In many parts they give the old answer, that nothing can be done in their district. Theirs, at least, is an incurable and incorrigible district. Nothing can be done; the people cannot be roused up! But try hard among that very people, and behold it is soon made manifest that this despairing note is only a libellous statement, which, in by far the larger number of instances, is put forward rather as an excuse for indolence than as the expression of a truth of the times. Amongst every people men rise up and say with Elijah, "I have been very zealous for the Lord of Hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away." Such statements have ever been made, and may always be answered as Elijah was answered, "Yea, I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." Such is the lesson this man must learn in his solitude, for even the best of men are not alone, save in their own fancy. Dost thou desire to do a good

thing? Then hide not the desire away in thine heart; keep not the good unspoken, for if thou wilt but declare it abroad, then the thousands who also desire to do the same will know the centre around which to rally, and the good will be speedily done. It is through indulging in the bad habit of thinking meanly of our fellow-men that we weaken our own power for good. When we say that the majority of men are so abandoned that they will not do well, then our own power to work out noble results is lessened. Let us rather believe that there are more men than can be found really anxious for accomplishing great ends, and our faith in them will inspire them with the desire to achieve noble purposes. We had far better always over-estimate the good than the evil. If we do the former, our courage will be increased, but if the latter, it will be diminished. Thus, too, shall we avoid the egotism into which Elijah had fallen, in supposing himself to be the only man who was faithful found. Egotism is bad enough in any form, but most pernicious when it wears the mask of religion, for they who become its slaves are on the high road to having no religion at all. They sink into self-worshippers, for, although the name of God is upon their lips, it is the admiration of their own "faithfulness" which is in their hearts, and while calling upon the name of God, they are in the mood of mind to pick a quarrel with Divinity if their petitions are not immediately and completely answered.

In the narrative furnished by the author of the "Kings," the orders to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and to call Elisha, were given in connection with this scene, but the accounts of these events are so contradictory that I must leave them to be dealt with in the next lecture, which will be upon Elisha. The event that figures so largely in the life of Elijah, and which follows these occurrences, is the story of Ahab, Naboth, and Jezebel—the story of the vineyard, which is narrated in the best style of the Hebrew writers. The author says that, after the Syrian war, Naboth, the Jezreelite, had a vineyard, which was situated in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab. "And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house; and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it, or, if it seem good unto thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."* The answer of Naboth has been spoken of as churlish, but he who speaks of his own property may be pardoned for replying in this tone. Still we are bound to acknowledge that Ahab had not dealt ungenerously with the owner. Many of those kings who have been favoured by the Churches, acted in a far more despotic manner. He did not seize upon the land, although, according to the Eastern usage, it would have been treated as a very proper course; he fairly offered other land, or its money value, and, if it were required for a garden of herbs, there could be nothing very ambitious or wicked about the desire to possess it. Naboth's refusal, however, seems to have wounded and irritated Ahab far more than his character would have led us to expect. "And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth, the Jezreelite, had spoken to him, for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid himself upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread."†

It is probable that had he been left alone he would soon have recovered from that fit—grown men do not generally sulk long from their dinners, for they know it is far from profitable. The writer now brings the queen upon the stage, for with the true Asiatic spirit, if there be anything evil it must be represented that a woman was at the bottom of it. "But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them

* 1. Kings xxi. 2-3.

† Ibid. 4.

"with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: and set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants of his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead. And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it." *

Here, by the way, and without entering into the question whether the story is correctly told, it is to be held as somewhat surprising that this narrative should have suggested to many preachers the idea that Shakespere was "greatly indebted to it for his tragedy of 'Macbeth.'" It is quite true that, in both cases, a woman is made the instrument for enabling a man to achieve his purposes, but in the Ahab story all the wickedness rests upon the shoulders of the woman. It is she who first conceives the idea of getting rid of Naboth; it is she who makes all the arrangements; and not until the victim is out of the way does the king learn that a course has been prepared, so that he can enter into possession of the vineyard. But in the "Macbeth" case it is the man who first conceives the idea of murder, and his wife merely whets his purpose, so that he shall complete that which he had desired. When, however, we look at the two stories as wholes, at the grandeur and solemn march of the drama, and the mere common-place method of the Hebrew story, the absurdity of supposing the latter to be the father of the former becomes too palpable to admit of any argument. Shakespere was indebted to his predecessors for the majority of his plots, but that of "Macbeth" lay in the national history; but while repudiating the theory, that he borrowed from the Book of Kings, I do not hesitate to express my sorrow that he refrained from composing Sacred, as he composed classical dramas; had he dealt with Israel as he dealt with Greece and Rome, he would have added one more to the many obligations he has conferred upon mankind.

* 1 Kings xxi. 5, 16.

(To be continued.)

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XIX.

THE INFIDEL MEETING.

ACCORDING to the promise he had given, Stokes left word at the Rectory that "the Monthly Meeting of the Inquirers would be held in Tom Davidson's parlour on the first Tuesday evening, beginning at eight o'clock." The said Davidson was a pensioner who retired from the army upon his serjeant's pay, which, in addition to the interest of money he had saved, supplied all his wants, and enabled him to defy those who spoke bitterly of his unorthodox opinions. He had travelled widely, and was a close reader, so that, although his circumstances were comparatively humble, he was better informed on many points than are some of those who occupy a far more important position. He was an avowed unbeliever, and was proud of having it in his power to place a good-sized room at the disposal of the Inquirers, when a larger meeting was to be held than could be accommodated in one of the smaller cottages. And upon this occasion, it having been hinted that "opposition was expected," there was the certainty of an overflow, so there was no other resource than that of going to Tom Davidson's.

At eight o'clock the room was full, but, when the Rector arrived, after a little bustle, a comfortable seat, near to a small table, was provided for him, upon which pens, ink, and paper, were placed, evidently intended for his use should he desire to take notes of the proceedings. There was no clapping of hands, or noisy clamour, when he took his seat, but it was unmistakably evident that his presence gave great satisfaction, and strengthened the conviction that there would be what Davidson styled "a battle royal about the goodness of David, and the faith of Abraham."

It was a rule of the society that he should take the chair in whose house the meeting was held, and thus, without any voting, Tom Davidson rose from his solid arm-chair to commence the proceedings.

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES, VOL. II.

"Gentlemen," said he, "some of you, perhaps, don't know what is to come on to-night, and I had better explain. We gave up two evenings to the reading of some religious tracts upon the patriarchs sent to me from Rose Hall. Miss Margery Poinder called in after I had got them, to know if they had been read. I promised her to go through them, and, as a soldier should, I kept my word with the lady. They were all read in the two evenings. Since then we have been giving our opinions about them, and the patriarchs, too, and to-night is to end that matter. And, to be plain about it, I don't think the whole bundle of Jew Fathers were worth being talked about for five evenings. There's nothing to be got out of them worth learning, and I'm sure we shan't get on if we act as they did, for the days of prospering through knavery and murder are gone for ever. Still, of course, we want to know the truth. There are some people who actually think as how we want to get hold of a lie, and swear by it, as if it were a truth—people that are mad or blind enough to imagine that we want to fight against God, and then go into the lake of fire, to be there for ever. Now, if there are any of that sort here to-night, let me tell them that it's, all such talk as that is, only fudge; we are not quite so foolish as they take us to be, and, if they cannot do anything to convince us, why, then, it's just no use to swear us out of our seven senses, or to try to frighten, when they can't reason with us. We are not going to be bullied, and won't be compelled to say we believe what we don't believe, and what we know is not believed by them as tries to frighten us."

Davidson resumed his seat, merely intimating that he should be glad to hear any gentleman who desired to express an opinion. Some minutes passed without any response to the invitation, for a sudden dumbness had smitten those who were in the habit of speaking. Finding that no one rose, Lester addressed himself to the meeting, and expressed the hope that his presence would not check the proceedings. "I am anxious," he said, "to do good unto all present if that is in my power, but, of course, before hoping to do so, I must hear what your real opinions are. At present, believing none of the rumours against you, I am here to form my own estimate, and trust in being enabled to do so. Yet, perhaps, although a stranger to your views, I may ask your chairman if he will explain how it is that he has learnt the important fact, that they who endeavour to induce you to accept the religion of the Bible do not themselves believe it. I have heard the same statement made by one of your members, and, as I conceive it to be utterly impossible for any man to know that another does not believe what he professes, I think it my duty to protest against such uncharitable and unjust charges. If your cause be good, it is bad policy to sustain it by unfair insinuations. Prove all that you can against them, but do not bring charges which, although they may damage the reputation of good men, cannot, from their very nature, be either proved or refuted."

There was some considerable applause followed these remarks, which however, did not operate unfavourably upon Davidson, for he rose at once and proceeded to furnish the desired information.

"Yes, the gentleman is right," he said, "in asking for an explanation. It does seem to be wrong to say that they do not believe what they professes, and yet, for all that, it is quite right. But this is the way I comes at my certainty. They say that all men who do not believe as they do are sure to go to hell. It's no use mincing the matter, for that is what they set up as the whole truth. Now, if they believed it, they couldn't be happy—couldn't sit to their business, for, in spite of all their prejudices, they'd be obliged to

come and hunt us up to try and get us out of the scrape. They are not so bad at heart as their creed would make them, and it would be a bad job if men, in a good many points, were not better than their doctrinal beliefs. Suppose that they believed we should all be burnt if we stayed two hours in this house, could they rest easy until they got us out? All Crosswood would be up in arms, and if we wouldn't go out by fair means, their being sure by stopping we should be burned, they'd have us out neck and heels by force. I know they would; and so if they believed in any right-down plain way that our souls would be burning throughout eternity, they'd be coming to us in shoals every minute in the day, for they couldn't be happy until they had got us to believe. Whereas, with the exception of the gentleman who has asked me the question, they won't come near us. That convinces me they don't believe what they say. Or if they do, then it's only a sort of tongue belief, which hasn't found its way into their hearts."

Lester could not avoid feeling the force of this reproachful justification, and thus, although not blind to—in a logical sense—its weak point, he made no attempt to continue the discussion. The ice, however, had been broken, and a labourer rose up to give the following opinion upon the general question:—

"I don't see what good's agoin' to come out o' this. We'd better talk about land and taxes. There's some'at in that, nothin' in this. 'Cause it's plain enough that the priests just put their cunnin' heads together and then wrote the Bible, so that they could make a pretty penny out of the people, and get pounds out of the squires for keepin' the poor folk down. I heard a sermon t'other wet Sunday, which was all about Adam and the Apple; and there was a deal in it about what sinners we was through them two munchin' that pippin, if it was a pippin. But it's clean against sense, and I don't believe a word of it. And as to the fall, why, the story about it's no better. Why, the people, poor souls, didn't see any difference atween good from evil, and I want to know how, in that case, they was agoin' to be made 'sponsible. I've got a babby at home as broke a pitcher t'other day, just arter the Missus had told un to let it be. But I couldn't lick un for it. Not I, 'cause the little chap didn't know good from evil. When he's got to know that, then if he smashes another, I shall tan him, and no mistake. That's jist the same as Adam and Eve. What did they know of right and wrong, more than my babby, till their eyes was opened to know what was good from what was evil? If they'd munched the apple after their eyes was wide open, then I wouldn't go about to say as they hadn't done wrong; but seein' as it was all done afore they know'd the difference, then I say it's clean agin plain sense to say as how God held them to be 'sponsible, and that all we is to pay for their sin and blunder. Its all a priestly got-up business, that's the long and short o' the story, and there's an end of it."

All this was said with a terrible energy, that bespoke confidence in the speaker's integrity, even from those who would be likely to treat his home-spoken logic with mirthfulness. But this energy and earnestness was shown by nearly all the speakers.

Bates, a plasterer, was speedily upon his legs, to put in his word against the last sentence of the preceding orator.

He did "not agree with the story about their makin' up the book, although there is no doubt about the priests makin' lashin's of money out of it. But," he continued, "if they wrote it, they were not half sharp about the Cain and Abel story, as they ought to have been, for that are right agin their doctrine.

Cain was sort of religiously jealous ; he quarrelled with his brother because of differin' about the kind of acceptable sacrifices, and, so far as I can see, there can be no more said than this, that, but for religion, the first murder would never have been done. And thus they who believe the story makes it out that God wouldn't accept the offerin' of Cain, because he didn't offer it rightly, but took that of Abel. Now, I can't understand how they know'd about Cain not doin' it right, nor about the acceptance. There aint no way as I can guess in which they'd get to know either of them things. If the story wor true, I should say Cain guessed it, and might have guessed wrong ; but it aint true, and all the talk in the world 'll never make me see it in t'other way."

Here a burly man rose up to declare that the very worst part of the book was that story about the Ark.

"If," said he, "God had wanted to have drowned the wickedness of the world, then He wouldn't have been satisfied with keeping Noah and his sons alive, for nobody can say as they were worth savin'. Then as to the Ark, what I want to know is just this, how all the beasts and birds could be got into such a small hold—how they could live there without being cleaned out ; how Noah and his people could stow away all the provender for themselves and the beasts ; and how it was that air was let in to keep 'em all agoin'. If it was all pitched close, and the door shut on the outside, none could enter, and all would have died, as they did on board the Irish ship. They die now, and that's a fact. Of course, they'd ha' died then. But, as our worthy chair-man says, 'it aint worth while to trouble about it, for there's no sort of truth in the story.'"

The tide of fierce repudiation now rose very rapidly, and the speakers were content to retain their seats while giving utterance to their objections. One man declared that from among the patriarchs Abraham should be picked out and exposed as a great knave and coward. "Why," said he, as if in reply to a stifled murmur against the use of such epithets, "didn't he go down to Egypt and tell the king that Sarah, his wife, was not his wife, but his sister ; didn't he take all the asses and presents Pharoah made together, and then, when Sarah came back to him, didn't he go away out of the country, carryin' all his plunder with him?"

"Plunder !" loudly whispered Lester, being unable to restrain himself.

"Yes, plunder," repeated the man, somewhat savagely ; "for what a chap gets under false pretences is plunder, and if he had told the truth the king wouldn't have given him a single camel. But he found out that it was a prosperous trade, and tried the trick over again. Didn't he serve Abimelech, the King of Gera, in the same way ? telling him that Sarah was not his wife. And then, when, as they say, God told the poor deluded king the truth, didn't Abraham accept a lot of things from him ? They say that God told the king to get Abraham to pray for him, and then he shouldn't be punished ; but I knows that aint true. God won't ask a liar to pray for the relief of honest men in that fashion. And there won't be much for any good man to hope for if God won't bless him until he gets the deceivers to pray for him. It's the victim, not the victimiser, that has got to pray."

Here another interposed to observe that Isaac had done the same by his wife, "and," he continued, "a pretty sort of fellow Jacob was. They cries out about Esau sellin' his birthright, but didn't Jacob catch his poor brother just at the time when he come in from a hard day's huntin', tired and hungry, and empty-handed, and refuse to give him pottage to eat until he sold his

birthright? I know of a chap as ruined a poor starvin' gal just when she hadn't a friend to help her, or a penny in the world; she sold her virtue to get bread to live, and I say he wor wus than she was, and so wor Jacob wus nor Esau. He was what people commonly call a liar to his poor blind father, and I'm sure he was not much better than a thief to Laban. But what's the use of our talkin' about these people? Some people calls 'em good and great, and we can't alter their opinion, 'cos they don't know anythin' about it. There is some," continued he, glancing at Lester, "who says that they were noble souls, and then asks us to imitate them, but I reckon they'd soon send us to gaol for three months if we wor to plunder as they did."

It is impossible to report the whole of the speeches delivered by various persons who took part in the proceedings, and all upon the one strain; not a single word favourable to the Bible or to its heroes escaped the lips of any; but from the occasional pauses it was evidently hoped that the rector would rise and say what could be said in their favour. Finding that he calmly retained his seat, one of the Inquirers, bolder than the rest, ventured upon assailing a series of his recent sermons. Lester had been preaching about the religious fervour and penitence of David, and without discussing his character as a whole, had given utterance to many sentences which were understood to indicate a respect for that monarch of Israel. The man who now rose had heard the series, and, without any preliminary remarks, he launched out into a fierce denunciation of David's whole career, as being that of a selfish conspirator, a narrow-minded tyrant, a gross sensualist, and a treacherous friend, one who would not stick at the commission of any crime so long as his own personal safety and profit were secured.

Involuntarily Lester said, "No! no! no!" but neither rose nor made any additional remark.

The speaker became angry, and was rendered quite incapable of summarising the events in David's life, which he viewed as justifying the language he had used. "As well defend Henry the Eighth, or the worst of the Popes!" he shouted, still in anger. But, as he neared the close, becoming cooler, he spoke with greater clearness, and then his description of the death-bed of "the hardened criminal" was truly eloquent and heart-stirring. He dwelt upon the murderous advice given by the dying king to Solomon, "Not to permit the hoar head of Joab—the man upon whom he had so greatly relied—to go down in peace to the grave;" and then, turning to the similar advice in the case of Shimei, unto whom he had previously extended pardon, he asked, "What can we say of the monarch who, having given this pardon, turned, when dying, to charge his successor, saying, 'Bring thou his grey head to the grave with blood'?" Adding, "It is an insult to our common morality to call him good, whose last injunctions were those of blood and vengeance, and it is blasphemy against the Divinity to say that he was a man after God's own heart."

No one else rose to speak, and, after waiting a few minutes, the chairman said, "I should be glad to hear our respected rector upon these points. He has heard what we believe, and if we are in error, I am sure we shall be all glad of correction. I would not lose the chance of hearing him in this room, where we are at liberty to ask questions about what we cannot understand, and may give reasons for our opinions."

Thus distinctly invited to speak, Lester, not without many misgivings, complied; but his manner plainly betrayed that he had far less confidence

in his cause than when he entered the room. After confessing how much he had been both pained and gratified by what had been argued, he resorted to the old armoury of replies, and urged that all the speakers had proceeded upon the assumption that the evil deeds of the patriarchs were approved by God, whereas the truth was, that their vices were all condemned, and their virtues only approved.

"Be kind enough to read that," said the Chairman, pointing at the same time to a passage in the book of Kings.

Lester complied, reading, "David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that He commanded him, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."

"Yes," he continued, "there are many such passages, and I do not wish to disguise the fact, that, when considering the conduct of David, they astonish me, but how shall I set up my poor judgment against that of millions of good men, who, knowing that we cannot understand all things, have been content to accept such difficulties as a test of our faithfulness to God? That there are things in the Bible hard to be believed, I confess, and far more of them than you can conceive, but I do not find that Nature, and what, I suppose, you call natural religion, is easier to be understood. Why should you expect God's word to be free from difficulties when His works are not so? Why should you hope to be able all at once to master the former, when you cannot do anything of that kind with the latter?"

The Rector paused, as if for a reply, and Stokes answered, "Because, Sir, it's said to be a revelation, and we ought to find a revelation clear to be understood by all. It aint a revelation if it don't explain things. And if it's all full of difficulties, and hard sayings and pictures of Divine injustice, which we can't get over, then it seems to be no use at all, for it leaves us just in the same fix they are in who have been called heathen. Any man can make out an account of things which won't stand a siftin'; and I'm sure that God wouldn't go about to vex poor creaters by giving 'em an account of things no better than a man could have done."

"I shall not discuss these points," said Lester, "because, under present circumstances, it would be as useless as it would be injudicious. There is a great deal of presumption in your speeches, when you say God would not do this, and would do the other; because, in truth, it is hardly for you to say what He would do. And yet I must do you the justice of acknowledging that, as it appears to me, it is not in a wicked spirit you have spoken. From others, who should have known better, you have caught the spirit of arrogance, which is betrayed in all such speeches, for many of my own brethren are too apt in speaking positively upon these points, as if they knew all that the Divine Being is Willing or Doing. And I must do you the justice of saying, that, although disapproving of much that has been said, I am impressed with the idea that you are not real unbelievers. My impression is, that you desire to maintain the honour of God as in your minds it is conceived, against what you call the misrepresentations of the Scriptures."

This observation had scarcely escaped his lips, before many hearty cries of "Hear, hear!" were most vociferously shouted from various parts of the room.

"That," said the Chairman, "is exactly what we mean. We believe that the God of a good man's heart and the God of the Old Testament are not one, but two opposites, which cannot become one."

"Then," continued Lester, "although sorrowing over you as over men

who are intellectually sick, I am bound to call you my brethren in the belief that the Divine Ruler, beside being no respecter of persons, cannot either do or sanction a wicked deed. Still, while going thus far with you, and allowing your intentions to be, in every sense, honourable, I cannot read the Old Testament through your eyes. I lament your self-assertion, and yet, I cannot say that you are either wicked, or desirous of turning men away from God. Probably, if you knew more of the poverty of our knowledge, and were less certain of knowing all about what God must do, or abstain from doing, you would be far more modest when criticising the curious narratives contained in the Bible. And if I do not now attempt any formal answer to your objections, you must not suppose such answer to be impossible. The fact is, that your course of proceeding has taken me by surprise. I have been taught to look upon all Freethinkers as men who repudiate the Scriptures, because they desire freedom to gratify their evil passions; or who do so because of desiring to ignore the moral government of God; this, in your case, is so evidently untrue, that I should rather say you reject the Bible because of believing it to contain narratives which dishonour the Creator. If I understand rightly, you mean to say that God is good, just, pure, and equal in His dealings; and I presume that, in some way not yet explained, this belief of yours is drawn from the facts and phenomena of Nature. Give me time to look into the matter from your point of view, and then, probably, I shall meet you again. Of course, too, I shall meet you as my fellow-men, who are fully justified in discussing these subjects. I shall not try to evade the force of the difficulties you have suggested, neither shall I use harsh expressions by way of hiding my ignorance. At least I promise honestly to tell you the thoughts of my heart, and till then, I hope you will conclude that this discussion is but adjourned."

These words of Lester were received with great warmth and good humour, and when the meeting broke up, there was a manifest anxiety to learn at what time he would meet them again.

MORAL PERFECTION.

MORAL perfection, or what is called perfect sinlessness, seems by common consent to be classed among the unattainable conditions of our being; but, probably, like many other popular opinions, this, when fairly examined, will turn out to be utterly unworthy of approval. We are far too prone to believe in human weakness and wickedness as unavoidable in our earthly life, and this is to be partly accounted for by the desire we have to furnish some plausible excuse for those actions of our lives which will not bear close investigation. It is flattering to our pride, to be able to ascribe our virtues to our high-wrought resolution, and our vices to some inherent defect in our original constitution, for which, of course, we are in no way responsible, and hence the readiness with which the statement is endorsed, that real perfection, that a truly sinless life, is not within the reach of any among the children of men. But should this be a delusive theory, the sooner that fact is recognised the better; for as no man can do his best to win the crown who starts with the conviction that victory is impossible, so, also, no man will be able to outstrip his competitors in the sphere of moral nobleness, who does not feel that a positive perfection is to be attained.

Moral perfection, however, is, in one sense, necessarily relative; like all else that is human, it stands related to its age and circumstances. Are human greatness, human heroism, and human genius, abstractly considered, absolutely perfect, or not, rather, perfect only in relation to the knowledge and habits of their age, country, and environments? There were men in ancient Greece and Rome, of whom the world now speaks in rapturous terms, as great men, but who, were they living in modern times, would pass unheeded in the crowd. Solon and Pericles, with a whole army of others it would be easy to name, were great men, and, probably, even with nobler specimens, the world will never cease to esteem them as such; still, at the same time, it is to be conceded that in modern days, both Solon and Pericles have been surpassed by men of whom the world knows but little, and cares not to know more. They did not realise their own ideal, did not show forth in their lives the whole of those virtues which themselves felt to be sound and noble, but that of which they fell short has been wrought out by thousands who did what they only dreamed, and yet have passed unsung from the memory of modern Europe.

In the sphere of physical philosophy, we have, in modern times, men whose method and knowledge vastly surpass those of Archimedes and Aristotle, and, indeed, were they to attempt to justify the notions of those celebrated Greeks, their teaching would be received with shouts of derisive laughter. Archimedes and Aristotle, believed and taught many things which are now known to be utterly at variance with truth, and yet, who is there to venture upon denouncing them as fools, or even to deny their claim to be considered great men? Our knowledge is cumulative; that which with so little trouble the schoolboy is taught to-day, is the outcome of vast toil, thought, and observation, performed by men of transcendent abilities. They marched upon the unknown and made it known, and labouring with the spirit of the greatest, they could not fail in becoming the world's benefactors. But although they had not comprehended the whole, we are still justified in calling them perfect as philosophers. Within their proper sphere they employed all the means at their disposal, and we are utterly unable to point out wherein they violated any, to them, known law of their science. But although masters of their position, they felt how poor was the amount of knowledge in their possession, and sighed for more. Can we not believe that it frequently occurred to them, to mark out an outline of what the philosopher would eventually know and be able to accomplish—that frequently, standing upon their bank of time, they looked away into the future, and imagined a variety of things which the man of science would accomplish, and new fields of knowledge which the thoughtful would one day master? But in their wildest dreams they could not have conceived of telegraphic communications by means of electricity, of travelling by the assistance of boiling water, or of lighting our roads and cities with smoke. What man amongst them could have dreamt that philosophers would arise who would discover planets before they had been seen by the human eye, who would take landscapes from the surface of the moon, and employ the sun to take portraits with the rapidity of lightning? Could they of the East, who devoted themselves to the study of physical philosophy, but look up from their graves to have unfolded to them all the knowledge and power of Faraday, Carpenter, or Owen, and without being informed of the manner in which it was connected with the work themselves had performed, there is no doubt that they would fall down to worship them as gods, for that such a stretch of knowledge, that such an

extension of power, would ever become possible to poor human creatures, had never entered into their wildest dreams, and, consequently, not only has their own perfection been surpassed, but that ideal also of which it is so commonly imagined that it must transcend the possibility of realisation.

Taking a single field of science as the basis of comparison, it is fair to name Hippocrates or Celsus, and Billing or Williams together. The former were of the earliest who, among the Greeks and Romans, treated the practice of medicine as an art which could be taught in schools, but when we compare their practice, and estimate their successes by the standards of modern Therapeutics, we are astonished at the gulf lying between them. The merest tyro in medical science is far better informed than they were, and six months study in a London hospital under its professors would qualify any intelligent man for doing far more in the way of healing diseases than was accomplished by the world-renowned Hippocrates or Galen. Still, they were perfect, and the tyro is not. They practised in the highest style of perfection all that was known in their age, and brought an amount of thought to bear upon their professional duties which, for its fullness and richness, must infinitely surpass all that the mere smatterer is capable of conceiving.

The same conclusion must be arrived at in relation to moral perfection. Our moral knowledge is cumulative the same as our scientific. We, to-day, are acquainted with moral duties which were totally unconceived in the classical and early Christian ages. Instance the two questions, of Slavery, and the Condition of Woman. No man whose mind is open to reasonable convictions, and who has studied the subject, will pretend that the slavery system was generally repudiated by Jesus, by Paul, or by the Early Church. In modern times men seize upon the injunction that we "shall do unto others as we would that others should do unto ourselves," which they argue is ample as a charge against slavery. But it is not well to forget that neither by the speaker nor the hearers were those words intended or understood in that sense. It is an easy matter to import a new meaning into old sentences, but we deceive ourselves when in this manner we try to reconstruct the history of the past. And as far as the condition of woman is concerned, it is but a solemn mockery when we are told that the early Christians laid the foundation of her progress upward, from a state of serfdom to that of equality. For her elevation she is more indebted to thoughts and modes of life which had their origin in the forests of Germany, than to anything said or done within the confines of Palestine. All through the New Testament her position is subordinate. She is still only *woman*, and is asked, "What have I to do with thee?" She is taught that her greatest glory lies in her obedience; she must hardly be seen, never heard, but always ready to work, and, in fact, her position is merely that of a superior servant, without wages.

But, is every man who takes a more correct view of slavery and the condition of woman to be spoken of as superior to Jesus and Paul? Must we say that they both were radically imperfect, and that he is nearer to moral perfection than they were? If the common theory be correct, then this is precisely what we shall have to say; but when put into a plain form, its absurdity is too palpable to deceive any one. The truth is that they were perfect, because, so far as their perceptions taught them, they were obedient to the law of duty. They were perfect in that they departed not from the course which their consciences prescribed, and if we wait for many ages, or journey in search through all the spheres, it will be impossible to meet with any higher degree of moral perfection.

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXXVIII.

ESTIMATE OF A KEMPIS' TEACHING.

VAUGHAN, in his "Hours with the Mystics," states the sources of mysticism to be "the reaction against the frigid formality of religious torpor; then "heart weariness, the languishing longing for repose—the charm of mysticism "for the selfish and the weak; and last, the desire so strong in some minds "to pierce the barriers that hide from man the unseen world—the charm of "mysticism for the ardent and the strong." Thus, as he further adds, though only with partial truth, "Mysticism has been incorporated in theism, "atheism, pantheism." The possibility of atheistic mysticism we doubt. It is, however, true that it has "appeared in the loftiest speculations and the "grossest idolatry, been associated with the wildest license and the most "pitiless asceticism, driven men into action, dissolved them into ecstasy, or "frozen them into torpor." The mysticism of à Kempis belonged to the first of the above-mentioned classes. It arose from a longing for repose from the fanaticisms and dissensions which in his time had well-nigh destroyed Christianity and religion too. It was a protest against the superstition and scepticism of the age, in behalf of what he believed to be the Christian idea. It taught that by faith on the part of man, love would arise between the human soul and the Deity, and man would thus be raised to unity with God. To attain this end, however, entire "abnegation of self" was necessary. And of all this it found the highest type in Christ. The aim of man, therefore, was to imitate Christ, to despoil himself of all that is his own and belonging to human nature, "to follow Jesus naked as he was naked, to "die to himself, and live for ever to God." To do this the sternest asceticism was the mode prescribed by Thomas. Having done this, the Divine Love would impart itself to man, and become the mediator between God and him. Thus, "Love brings together the holy God who dwells in Heaven and the sinful creature upon earth," and humanity is lost in union with Divinity. It was, in fact, a kind of Christian pantheism, God and man originally one, divorced by Sin, reunited by Love. Metaphysically false, it has nevertheless a beautiful moral truth in it. Change the blind faith which à Kempis teaches for obedience to the Will of God, to be exemplified in a life of earnest search after truth and endeavour to do right, and then, indeed, we may say that the human soul will be exalted to companionship with God. At the same time, let it not be supposed that we would endorse the statement that God is estranged from his child, man, for "He loveth whom He chasteneth," and even in our sins we find proof of this, the penalties they ensure being but voices teaching us the way of righteousness and peace.

It had been well said that to call the system propounded by Thomas à Kempis the "Imitation of Christ," is a misnomer. Christ "went about "doing good;" Thomas prescribes a solitary asceticism. Christ mixed with men; Thomas says, avoid them. Christ loved humanity with an all-embracing love; Thomas finds nothing loveable in it. The entire system of Thomas is, in fact, essentially monastic, anti-social, and selfish in its tendency. Here, at least, some may think is found a point of departure between him and modern orthodoxy. But if we think a moment we see that this is not so. What was the aim of the monk, and what is the aim of the religion of our churches and chapels? The aim of the monk was to save his own soul; he cared nought for mankind at large. The aim of the modern "Evangelical" is the same—to save his own small soul; and, in accomplishing this, he overlooks all that

concerns humanity in general. It is a personal religion alone which the author of the "Imitation" teaches; it is a personal religion after which the orthodox pious of the present day seek. The grand broad principle of the Christianity taught by Christ—Love to man—forms no part of "evangelical" religion; and the love to God taught in the orthodox pulpits is an essentially selfish principle. To use the words of old Master Eckart, the earliest of the German Mystics, these "people love God as they love a cow, which they love "for the milk and the cheese, and for their own profit."

With what sad and evil results has this selfish religion become prevalent amongst us! Why is it, that the churches and chapels give no efficient aid to the great reforms, so much needed amongst us? It is, because to do this, would be to interfere with the singings and prayers which are so necessary in order that the pious souls who go there may be "saved from the wrath to "come." They have as it is, they will tell you, but too little time for this all-important work; life is too short to be wasted, and Heaven too precious to be risked, for the sake of worldly matters. And yet it will generally be found that it is not too short to attend to "getting on" in life, and getting rich as fast as possible. Alas! for us, if this be religion. We can only piously hope that the Heaven to which these people go may never receive us as their companions. And when we look abroad upon the world as it is, we see the results of this religion of selfishness taught in our churches and chapels. It is quite a different thing which the world at large needs to learn and take to heart. If the Churches taught a Religion of Love and Self-sacrifice, if men learnt in their daily life and actions to exhibit a grand spirit of self-sacrifice in reference to the wrongs and injustice, the sin, sorrow, and suffering around them, and in this spirit went forth to strike down the wrong, to wipe away the tears, to lessen the distress of their fellows, how different would be the world in which we move! As it is, but a small thing prevents, a little inconvenience, a fear of parting with a small portion of their time, or their money, or their comfort, stands between them and many a noble act of charity; and, say they, what matters, for these are "works of "supererogation"? Their hopes and aims are selfish, because their religion is selfish. Nay, we will not call it "religion." Let no man claim to be a religious man who is not possessed of the spirit of self-sacrifice, for it is the soul of all religion. It is this which lies as the centre thought of Christ's teaching, and which forms the grand eternal truth that will keep Christianity alive long after the Calvinisms, and the Methodisms, and the other things which men call Christianity have passed away for ever, and no longer cumber the face of the earth. It is this which constitutes the wide difference between the Christianity of Christ and that taught in our Churches, and which, again we say, is not religion. The real religious Reformation is to come, which shall teach men that only in earnest performance of duty, only by striking down injustice, and chasing evil from among us, only by attention to the means of lessening the sin, sorrow, and suffering in the world, can man obey the Will of God. Let us do that, and depend upon it our souls will save themselves.

There was a picture of Thomas à Kempis of which Tolensis gives an account, beneath which, he tells us, was the motto: "I have sought rest "everywhere and found it nowhere, save in solitude and books." We want no more than this to paint the man; in this motto we have his soul laid bare for us. He was the true monk, the man who would selfishly fly from the din and turmoil of the great Battle of Life. We will not turn and curse him for this; on the contrary, we will the rather pity him that he should have

been so mistaken in his views of duty. But to those who ask us to honour such men, we say that we cannot do so, because to do this would be to hide from ourselves the path in which only true honour can be gained, that of active work, heartily, ungrudgingly, and unceasingly done, in order that the evils of the Present may be destroyed, and a nobler Future made possible for humanity. Negative goodness is all that can be debited to the account of men like Thomas à Kempis; and you may say of them the same thing as the poet says of "Lady Mary"—"They had not blood enough to sin!" Let us never be forgetful of the truth (which cannot be too frequently repeated), that innocence is not virtue, that virtue only comes of earnest fightings with the various evil influences with which man is surrounded in life, and of the successful resistance of manifold temptations. He who flies from the battle can never be accounted virtuous. Luckily for humanity, there have been pious souls who have acted very differently to Thomas à Kempis; the great-souled Luthers, and Wycliffes, and Husses, and Savonarolas, men who threw themselves into the thick of the fight, who, instead of "seeking rest everywhere," did not even ask for rest, but set themselves earnestly to work for humanity, and worked with all their might until the hour came when, as martyrs or as marching-soldiers of God, they were called on to depart from this to a higher and a better land. These are the true Redeemers, these the real Saviours of the World, for it is by the efforts of such men that all that has been gained in the Past was achieved, and by the efforts of such men only is it possible that the injustice and the wrong of a Present can be removed, and a higher Future worked out for man. And think not that any religion cometh of God which teaches that the world is not worthy of such work, or that such work is no part of religion. No! the Religion of God is a religion of action. A good deed is the best sacrifice we can offer to him. Do this, and depend upon it there will then be no need with Thomas à Kempis to "seek rest," for God's rest will be ours wherever we may be.

Without wishing in the least to depreciate the work of à Kempis, the value of which has already been allowed, it still remains to be said that humanity had need of a wider truth than that taught by him, before it could be fully roused to work towards a Reformation. Men had need to look beyond their own salvation, and to learn to love and work for their fellows. The wider truth required to form the moving spring to this, is found in the German Mysticism, at the characteristics and results of which we have yet to look. But before doing that, it may be as well, more definitely, to answer the question, In what way, then, did Thomas à Kempis aid the Reformation idea? He did this by means of the teaching, apparent throughout the whole "Imitation," of the non-necessity of priestly intervention between Man and God, and the wide-spread belief of this fact which followed from his teaching. The doctrine insisted on throughout his book, is, that the soul of its own act may purify and exalt itself to God. No other spiritual teacher or guide is necessary, and spiritual perfection may be arrived at, and unity with God attained, by the study of the precepts contained in his little book. All the paraphernalia of the Romish ritual were thus superseded; aye, and more than that, the forms and ceremonies which obtain in Protestant worship are superseded too. Sacraments, confessions, absolutions, and what not, are all discarded, and every man is his own priest. A truth, a noble truth; and one, alas! which the Reformation itself failed to work out. It has yet to be worked out, and must be before Priestcraft will be dead.

The German Mysticism was equally anti-sacerdotal with that taught by

à Kempis. And when we find in a book so widely read as the "Imitatio," and a system of religious opinions so wide-spread as Mysticism became in Germany before the Reformation, the expression of a truth not worked out by the Reformers, it is not to be considered wonderful that Mysticism and Protestantism should afterwards become as much opposed as it and Romanism were. In Jacob Boehme, and the Mysticism of the post-reformation period, when Mysticism became a disturbing force, in connection with the developments of Protestantism in the Lutheran Church, we have the historical fact; and in estimating German Mysticism we shall have the opportunity of showing why the fact was so. Suffice it now to remark that this is one of the many proofs we have that the Reformation of the sixteenth century was imperfect and incomplete, in many respects, even for its own age. Let the fact stand; we charge not the Reformers with blame, but that spirit of Priestcraft which stood in their way, and, indeed, blinded the eyes of many of them to the entire truth they might otherwise have seen; the same spirit which in these days would willingly prevent any further Reform, and dubs the man who talks of such by the hard names of which the theological vocabulary is so full.

JAS. L. GOODING.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

(Concluded from p. 192.)

THERE seems to be no doubt entertained by our commentators regarding the story of Naboth, and falling in with the narrative, they see no evil save in Jezebel and Ahab. But what are we to say of the elders and head men of the city, who so readily executed the orders they are reported as having received? They seem to have had no suspicion about the correctness of the order, but coolly set to work to execute it. And if it were so, then surely they deserved as severe a censure as fell upon Jezebel. It is the coward who helps the tyrant, and were it not for those ready servitors, who, either through fear, or because of their hope of reward, are so willing to obey the commands of a king, not one tithe of the tyrannical deeds recorded would have been done. In this case, the responsible men are said to have lent themselves to a deed of murder without hesitation, and doubtless such deeds were common enough in the East; but why should we look upon the Hebrews as a superior people, when we are constantly called upon to believe them guilty of such atrocities, upon the ground that other nations were equally guilty?

The narrative proceeds to relate that Ahab arose, and went to take possession of the vineyard, "And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.'"* Elijah obeyed, and it is supposed that when the king reached the vineyard he actually found the prophet there, and thus addressed him, "Hast thou found me, 'O mine enemy?'" It argues somewhat in favour of the prophet, that he should thus venture upon confronting the king, but that is upon the supposition of Jezebel having told him of the manner in which Naboth had come by his death. Did she do so? There is no hint that she did, and the spirit of the earlier part of the story is strongly against that assumption. But if she did not, then Ahab could not have felt as a murderer in the presence of Elijah.

* 1 Kings, xxi. 17-19.

The prophet is reported as saying, "I have found thee; *and* because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord, behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab . . . him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat: and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.'"

There are few grander scenes in history than those in which a poor weak man is seen to stand up against the high and mighty, to tell them of their faults, and to denounce their crimes, and assuming that Ahab was a wicked king, that Elijah was a man inspired by mere hatred of wrong, this scene must take its place among the best. But, unfortunately for Elijah, it is understood that he was not acting freely, but only as a messenger: he came not of his own accord, but because of being sent by Jehovah: he spake not his own word, but that which he was instructed to speak. Thus is he stripped of the patriot's mantle, and made to appear in the lower light of a mere messenger. For what virtue can there be in obeying the will of heaven, when that has been made known in a supernatural manner? We may resist the commands of earth, but when the word of heaven comes with authority, so that he who hears knows its force, there can no longer be resistance, doubt, or fear of danger. But we can scarcely believe that this was the word of heaven, for in some particulars it was not fulfilled. Ahab did not suffer as it was predicted. Dr. Kitto, and others, account for the failure in the following manner: "The words of Elijah, '*Where* dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood,' were literally accomplished in his son, to whom his doom was in some sense transferred on his humiliation; and it was virtually thus accomplished in Ahab. The words may mean no more than that dogs should lick his blood, even as they had licked the blood of Naboth."† So that because Ahab humbled himself, the punishment was turned away from him to be visited upon his son, but surely we are not to believe that he who has been pardoned, is merely relieved from a punishment which is to be borne by another! That Jezebel should suffer is quite natural, but that the son of Ahab should do so—as a special visitation—is not to be credited.

A curious story is told of this son and Elijah. After the death of Ahab, Ahaziah, the son in question, fell down through a lattice, and injured himself. In his injured condition "he sent to Baal-zebub, the God of Ekron," to inquire if he were likely to recover. The author of the Book of Kings naturally believed that Jehovah would feel himself insulted by that inquiry, hence, probably, the following narrative: "But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed."‡ Elijah did this, and the messengers turned back to tell the king what they had heard. On inquiry, he discovered that it was Elijah who had sent this message, and in his anger he sent a captain with fifty men to bring the prophet before him: "Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from

* 1 Kings, xxi. 20-24.

† Kitto. Daily Readings, vol. iv. p. 272, note.

‡ 2 Kings, i. 3, 4.

"heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty."* The destruction of these men is inexplicable, because there was no crime committed by them. They were sent, not to slay the prophet, but to bring him to the king, and as Elijah afterwards went with the third fifty, obviously there can be no reason why he should not have gone with the first. It is assumed that the captain mockingly called him a "man of God," but there is no proof, and even if there were, the mocking spirit of the captain cannot justify the destruction of his fifty men. All those who have tried to harmonise this fall of fire with the moral government of God, have signally failed, and I do not hesitate to reject it as totally unworthy of credit, for even if the captain had erred in his style of address, we should not have been justified in believing he was thus consumed.

We have now to deal with what is called the "Ascension" of Elijah, one of the features in his career which has puzzled the commentators. Of course, in modern times we are placed at a disadvantage for believing this story. The knowledge we have of the immensity of space, causes us to doubt the story of the body of a man passing away from the earth up into heaven. To the ancients this was easy of belief. They viewed the blue above as the floor of heaven, and many of them imagined that from the summit of lofty mountains, a man could put forth his hand to touch it. They believed that the Gods and Angels came down and returned again with great freedom, and, consequently, saw no reason to doubt that a man could rise through the air in a chariot of fire. But now that we know something of the laws of attraction and repulsion, we are unable to conceive of any body rising out of our own sphere, and even if we did, it seems impossible to conceive of its travelling through space with greater rapidity than light—how, then, can we imagine "the journey of Elijah in his bodily form to heaven"?

It is not, however, necessary for us to imagine anything of the kind, because the story itself is self-contradictory. If we are to believe the record, the sons of the prophet were all aware beforehand of what was to occur. "And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as my soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on."† So that all these persons were aware of the wonder that was to come to pass, but the prophet himself knew not that they knew it. He endeavoured to detach himself from Elisha, as Kiel surmises, "because of his modesty, not desiring that anyone should see his great glory." What would this commentator have said, had the story been told of a Pagan? What do they all say when the traditions of Romulus's Ganymedes, and Tithones are under consideration? Then we are bound to use our reason, but not so in the case of Elijah. The story, however, moves on, "And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up

* 2 Kings, i. 9-12.

† Ibid, ii. 3-6.

"by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces."* So that he was received up into heaven without having tasted of death? And beyond this, we are called upon to believe that from heaven many years afterwards he sent a letter to another King of Judah—Jehoram. The narrative of this is supplied in the Chronicles. "And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, but hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself; behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: and thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day."† This letter was sent at least twelve years after the ascension of the prophet, and hence the conclusion of so many of the learned that there was no such lifting up into heaven. Good old Ephraim sagely admits that "people do not receive letters from those who are in heaven," and evidently his belief was in accordance with that of other Churchmen, that Elijah withdrew from the country to dwell at a distance. Some have suggested death in a thunderstorm, death by a flash of lightning, or his being carried away in a whirlwind; in either of which cases it would be easy for imagination to work the fact into the form in which it now appears. And this seems to be justified by a passage in the book itself. Many of the sons of the prophets who were in view of the ascent, and who had previously learnt that it was to take place, evidently did not believe it. The writer says, "And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him. And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not."‡ So that they did not believe in the ascension as it is generally conceived, neither can we, and for the simple reason that there was nothing to warrant it. What was there in the life of Elijah to warrant the interference of heaven for his exaltation and honour? Did he transcend the heroes of other nations? In what sense was he either wiser, nobler, purer, or more self-sacrificing? We search in vain through the records for anything to justify the lofty language which many employ in speaking of him, for in truth he fell far below those whom we feel bound to hold in honour. If as a Jewish prophet we are to hail him as a marvel, then we can only do so by believing that people to have been low and easily satisfied; but to treat him as one of the world's heroes is utterly impossible, seeing that he lacked all those higher qualities of mind and nobleness in action which justify men in according praise and veneration.

* 2 Kings, ii. 7-12.

† 2 Chron. xxi. 12-15.

‡ 2 Kings, ii. 15-18.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.

CHAPTER XX.

AN EVENING AT THE RECTORY.

GEORGE BARRINGTON had not long returned to Crosswood before, partly through the desire of Lester, and partly through his own inclination, he became a regular visitor at the Rectory; where, through many months, as he declared, the happiest evenings of his life were spent. But a change had come over him. Whether it was through feeling that theological discussions are not exactly in place when only one lady is present—who of course would be shut out from the conversation; or from a desire to avoid giving offence to the deep and honest religious convictions of Lester, or from some other and hidden cause, it would be hard to say; but it is certain, that, he avoided touching upon the numerous disputable topics which stand prominently forward as characteristic of the popular creed and orthodox teachings. There must have been some powerful motive else he could not have passed them so silently over, for, although unuttered, the objections were none the less uppermost in his mind, and he continued quite as resolute as before in his unbelief. Still it remained unspoken, and the pleasant evenings were whiled away in literary, and, occasionally, in political conversation, in which Ella took no unimportant part. The three were soon as familiar as though they had known each other for years, and through that there came a sense of freedom which was productive of a perfect artlessness and absence of reserve in speaking. Many were the battles fought in that rectory parlour about the works of ancient and modern authors, but especially in relation to the leading living poet and the greatest modern master of the art of prose composition. Ella stood up for Tennyson; Barrington, strangely enough, declaimed against him, while Lester blew both hot and cold, sometimes praising, and then as loudly blaming. One evening when the three were together in the Rectory, shortly after the publication of “Maud,” and while it was still going the round of

criticism, Barrington opened fire upon Ella, by asking if she, having read the Laureate's "war at any price" nonsense, could still defend her favourite—could she still maintain that he stood in the vanguard of progressive civilisation?

"Defend him? yes," said Ella, "and may I not challenge all his enemies to produce lines from the whole range of modern poetry, which for truth, beauty, and music, will equal many of those to be found in the much-denounced Maud?"

"Granted! Yes, Miss Lester, you may without fear of a fall issue your challenge; but it is through that fact I am compelled to speak angrily of your favourite. It is because he is capable of achieving the highest, that I am irritated by his comparative weaknesses. He writes as no other man can do, he possesses powers of the loftiest order, and yet his poems are not destined to become the household words of mankind; they will not live long, nor largely benefit his own generation. They have the advantages of grace, polish, and musical refinement, still they lack nearly all those robust and man-like qualities which give breadth and strength to the compositions of Shakspeare. You will call me a Goth for it, I know, still I would rather have one Shakspeare, one Milton, or even one Wordsworth, than a million Tennysons."

"I, too," answered Ella, "prefer the elder to the younger poet; but may it not be that each is a perfect master in his own field of labour? The dramatist dealt mainly with man and woman in action, or with what they call the objective; whereas the Laureate chiefly deals with them in meditation, with their subjective side; are they not the two sides of one coin, each being as complete and full of meaning as the other?"

"I believe not," interposed Lester. "And in truth it is scarcely fair to the elder to suggest that he presents but one side of the whole, for Shakspeare was as metaphysical as any, but he succeeded so admirably in combining his abstract thinking with the realities of life, that although bearing his readers up into the unknown and highest realms of thought, he still permits their feet to touch the earth. Then, too, all his metaphysical reasonings, all his abstract passages are based upon universal modes and courses of thought, which causes them to find an echo in every breast. He never travels away from the earth astride of rays from an electrical light, to reach a table-land of fog; but, starting from the universally real, he ascends into the ideal regions, so as the better to survey and estimate what cannot be so well, when closely, seen. I always feel a kind of idle pleasure in reading Tennyson—it is much the same as that kind of undefined pleasure felt by youth when it lies without thought by the gurgling stream in summer-time—but he neither clears my vision nor imparts strength. As Dickens pounces upon an oddity, a wart, or some other subordinate peculiarity, and works upon it, hammering it out until that which was but occasionally visible, becomes the complete mark and sign of the man, so does Tennyson fasten upon a mere mood of the mind, and working it out with great skill, he succeeds in presenting us with a complete portrait—a portrait of the mental man, set in a frame too costly for the subject. The lines and language are too good for their theme. I cannot but feel, that had he lavished half as much golden thought, had he bestowed but a tithe of the pains upon characters worthy of being seen and studied, he would have made the world his debtor to an extent not reached by any poet of modern times. But he has chosen otherwise, and I quite agree with Barrington in the belief that, although many of his lines will live,

his poetry as a whole will speedily die. Even Cowper will outlive him, and Burns will continue to be idolised when the name and present fame of your favourite will have passed away from the memory of mankind."

Ella entertained a profound respect for the decisions of her brother, but this did such violence to her own estimate of the Laureate, as to render it utterly impossible that she could defer to it. She now ventured not only upon dissenting from his opinion, but also upon arguing out and assigning reasons for her conviction, in doing which, she cited various passages from *The Princess*, one of her favourite poems.

Both the gentlemen had read that strange medley, and had been dissatisfied with the discordant materials therein heaped together; they were delighted by the freshness and descriptive beauty which flashes out in so many parts, but could not bring themselves to speak approvingly of the total want of naturalness in the incidents. The fact was, that neither of them had read the work with that degree of attention which should be bestowed upon the productions of a good poet, or they could not have failed to perceive, that beneath the seeming diversity there is an under-current of thought which blends the whole into perfect unity. Ella had read and re-read the poem, until her mind had become equally familiar with its external beauties, and its internal excellencies.

Barrington suggested, that although abounding in beauties, it was a mocking satire upon woman, alike untrue to nature, and unworthy the pen of a priest of nature.

"No," interposed Ella, "it is not a satire; there are playful strokes, there are humorous sallies in it, but no right-minded woman ever feels offended by them. As a whole, the poem is a noble defence of our sex from the unfair assaults of its enemies, and the mistaken representations of its friends. It is a lesson and a defence, and I want nothing beyond the fine description of his mother given by the Prince, or indeed the entire passage in which it recurs, to convince me that no satire upon woman was intended by the author."

Feeling insecure upon the ground he was then treading, Barrington resorted to Maud, and suggested, that, considered as a whole, it was a sad closing up of all hope for the future. "What," asked he, "can we expect after that?"

It happened that Lester had not yet read it, and confessing his idleness, he asked for information as to its plot and scope.

Barrington answered that, "the hero of the work breaks ground by relating how his father was 'found dead' some time before in a 'dreadful hollow' behind a little wood near at hand. Whether he died by his own hand or by that of another is left in doubt; although the former is most probable, and is to be accounted for by the failure of a great speculation in which he had engaged. There was a neighbour who had profited so largely by the same affair, as to have become lord of the estate upon which this hero, son of the former owner—intensely hating the present proprietor—now lives in diminished splendour, yet in a condition of gentlemanly ease. But he is not very gentlemanly either in mind or manners. He is one of those suspicious, morbid-minded men who look with a jaundiced eye upon all things which do not harmonise with their conception of right. And that conception, if realised, would make the world to be a perfect hell. Such men complain that they are not happy but miserable, and speak as though it were the bounden duty of their companions to labour their best to render them happy. We

have no right to slay these grumblers, still they do but encumber the ground ; and we have no more right to make them the heroes of a poem, bringing in all their miserable chafings, than we have to hold up the costermonger as a hero, and to furnish his views of life and duty. Byron accomplished quite enough in that style, but what he did was done well. This hero in Maud, rants through many lines about the evils of society ; he hates the adulteration of food, the druggist who ‘pestles a poisoned poison ;’ the doctor who cheats the sick of a few more gasps ; the baker who deals out alum and plaster ; the rude brute who tramples upon his wife ; and the mammonite mother who kills her child for a fee. Being intensely selfish and evil, he hates all evil things, not because they are such, but because they interfere with his enjoyment. He preaches a higher morality from his stomach, and, like another Crown Court Doctor, he holds forth against money-getting, but all the while he hates those who have it for the fact that it exalts them above himself. I felt while reading this portion, an intense desire to choke the hero. But to crown his invective, he holds forth against peace as the curse of the age. War, with all its horrors, is to be hailed as a blessed spirit charged with power to redeem the lost, and to rouse us once more to nobler ambitions. Thus, like Job of old, but without his nobleness, he sits down to curse all men and all things ; he does not find them convenient for his purposes, and endeavours to compensate for that fact by dooming them to everlasting destruction.”

“But,” asked Lester, “do you mean to say that Tennyson approves of such miserable nonsense ? I cannot conceive how it could be possible for him to endorse opinions of that sort ; he is a man whose mind and hands are clean, and it would be against nature to believe that he could bring himself so low as to approve of such impurity.”

“I take the facts as I find them,” answered Barrington, “and there can be no mistake about it that the spirit of the whole poem is warlike, anti-commercial, and in favour of the old families. A new family is gall and wormwood unto him, and he who preaches of peace is denounced as—

‘This broad-brimm’d hawker of holy things,
Whose car is stuf with his cotton, and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence.’”

“That, perhaps, is too severe,” observed Lester, “still I cannot get rid of the idea that the ‘peace-at-any-price’ men are in error. In my pulpit I preach of the blessings of peace, not forgetting the results of war when waged in resistance either against a person or a people who desire to do unjustly. But to propose war as a general remedy for corruption, is as unjust as slavery itself, which proceeds upon the theory that we are to seek our own good at the cost of other people. If we have grown corrupt at home, some means of curing the disease must be found besides that of inflicting a curse upon our neighbours. But I will read the poem, for I cannot bring myself to believe that Tennyson would propose anything so monstrous.”

“That, however,” continued Barrington, “is not the worst of it. The poet now proceeds to bring Maud, the daughter of the hated owner of the estate, upon the scene, and this he accomplishes in language whose beauty and power are not to be denied. The hero had resolved upon seeing but equally upon avoiding to love her ; the natural resolve of an egotist. He sees and loves her, and her voice exerts an irresistible power over him. She, too, soon loves in return, and, with a decent sort of being, affairs would glide on easily enough—making allowance for her wealth, and his comparative poverty

—but the miserable fellow is haughty, suspicious, and ready to distort every word into something unpleasant. Maud has a brother, who, of course, is intensely hated by this morbid lover, and described by him as—

‘ That jewell’d mass of millinery,
That oil’d and curl’d Assyrian Bull,
Smelling of musk and insolence.’

Which, to say the least, was not very complimentary to the lady. One night after a party—to which the hero was not invited—by appointment, he waited in the garden for her to meet him, but she came not; accidentally, her brother came; a quarrel ensuing, a duel was fought, and that brother was killed. The hero of this tragedy now fled to the Breton coast, where he proceeded to soliloquize in terms scarcely more insane than those he indulged in prior to the catastrophe. The author represents him as becoming mad, but the fact is he had never been sane, or if sane then particularly silly. For a time he was plunged into the world of recognized phrenzy, out of which he recovered while hearing the news that the allies had declared war against Russia, whereupon he bursts into a poem that—

‘ The long, long canker of Peace is over and done.’

So that there was a chance for himself and other gentlemen of similar habits to indulge in the sport of killing a neighbour. Such, Lester, is the story of this poem, and I cannot but feel that it is a miserable one. Say that it is a fair writing out of a real life—was it worthy of so much skill? Are we justified in hanging wreaths of roses round a dunghill? If we get rid of Grub Street poetry, must we not get rid also of Grub Street subjects? The great souls still remain unsung, while such a miserable wretch finds his loving scribe.”

“ Yes, but Tennyson could not have loved the man ! ”

“ Perhaps not, Lester, but who knows? The artist selects his own subject, and must be supposed to enter heartily into its execution. And poets, above all others, cannot work upon themes which do not satisfy their hearts. Milton loved his ‘ Satan,’ and Goethe, his ‘ Mephistopheles’; why not suppose that Alfred Tennyson, grown to be somewhat of a Tory, loved the hero of ‘ Maud’? I believe him to have done so, and thus, while rendering due homage to his great genius, and admiring all the noble portions of his works, I still feel that he is not the Priest-poet of a better age.”

Ella, who had listened attentively to the conversation, here observed that the style of criticism was not just to the author. She maintained that the poem was never intended to be read literally; and that it was composed as an allegory, in which the hero, who she admitted was a miserable fellow, represented all the suspicion, fretfulness, selfishness, and viciousness of the present age, and that all the other characters are but types of the various classes into which society is broken up.

Barrington confessed that it would be quite easy to deal with it as an allegory, but not by way of removing his objections. “ If,” he continued, “ there are noble meanings underneath, so much severer should be our denunciation. The poet, above all men, is prohibited from presenting the truth in a repulsive form. If from him we do not obtain the beautiful with the good, the pure with the noble, from whom are we to expect them? Goethe’s noblest work was his ‘ Wilhelm Meister,’ but its value as a teaching is destroyed by the sensual form in which it is composed: the same truths could have been taught under other illustrations, which, being done, no

danger could have arisen. And if Tennyson desired to teach his countrymen some noble lessons, he should have adopted a form which would have assisted, without confusing his readers."

To this Ella could raise no objection, and could only suggest that, even if the form were unadvisable, still the substance was real. The poet had done no more than stereotype the vices of the time.

Here, again, Barrington protested his belief that the present age, with all its faults, is greatly superior to its predecessors, arguing, that "the difference between ours and other ages lies not so much in the increase of vice (an increase which I repudiate as merely imaginary) as it does in the increased observation and attention it obtains. There is not more vice, but more talk about it; in fact, while there is too much vice, there is less relatively than formerly. Look into the list of murders. There are less in England, on the average, than formerly, but, aided by the press, the details of every case are spread through the country every morning. The newspaper contains the villainy of the whole land epitomised. As to trade tricks, it is absurd to imagine them to be novel. Was there no lime in Falstaff's sack? And as to charity and true philanthropy, there is far more of it to-day than there was when Bess was Queen, or when 'Good King George' wielded the sceptre."

"Do you then believe," asked Lester, "that, as a people, we are not travelling to the Devil; that we are growing in wisdom and goodness equally with our growth in power and wealth?"

"Yes, that is nearly what I mean; and it will not be well for us if we close our eyes to the facts. We may go on preaching about our wickedness, our natural depravity, until, at length, we shall get to believe it as a painful truth; but I trust better things will come, and that truer theories will prevail."

"There is great room for improvement in Crosswood," said Ella; "and if the people are better than they were, I almost tremble to think what savages they must have been."

"What has been stirring to-day? Is there some new story? some new rumour? Am I denounced as a wicked Atheist?"

"Yes, my brother, you are. At the Hall, to-day, Miss Margery lamented to me that you gave so much of your time to our guest, whom she declared to be a confirmed Atheist, who is leading you into unbelief."

"Of course, Ella, you corrected her!"

"No, that I did not; for, like a true woman, I permitted the jade, Rumour, to have her own way. Had I corrected the error, it would only have cost the people a little trouble to imagine a story about somebody else. They must have some one to abuse, and why not yourself or our friend? What would you have said had you been present?"

"Well, indeed, Ella, I hardly know. We have not conversed much upon that subject. But come, what say you Barrington—shall we discuss theology, taking in Ella to judge between us? We have both avoided it; I have done so in somewhat of a cowardly spirit, but, as it must come at some time, I propose that you shall just say out all you can against the popular belief, and I will do my best to answer all your objections. I do really desire to discuss the subject in a quiet manner; for, although it was a rude criticism, I was much impressed by the speeches made at the Infidel Meeting."

"Agreed!" said Barrington joyously. "Let us, then, at our next meeting, plunge heartily into this great question."

Ella consented to be present as usual, but evidently the proposal gave her much pain, and she looked forward to the result with fear and trembling.

(A CIRCULAR.)

THE FREE CHURCH,

(A CONGREGATION OF THEISTS.)

14, NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD STREET.

SOCIETY OF INDEPENDENT RELIGIOUS REFORMERS.

It is a note-worthy fact, that, although within the past ten years, especially in religious circles, the tendency to recognise a pure theism,—unconnected with Biblical narratives and written authority,—has been unmistakeable, nothing has been done in the way of providing public places wherein Theists can assemble, either for instruction or conversation; or into which they may invite their friends to hear the principles of Natural Theism explained. There are several ‘advanced Unitarian Churches,’ but in none of them is there the measure of freedom from dogmatic, or what is usually called ‘Scriptural Authority,’ which the cultivated reason and rapidly-extending knowledge of the age render necessary.

Five years ago, desirous of meeting the difficulties of the case, an attempt was made by a well-known lecturer—P. W. PERFITT—to establish a congregation of Theists; for which purpose he rented South Place Chapel, Finsbury, to be used by him on the Sunday Evenings for the delivery of lectures and religious discourses. At first the congregation was very small, but it gradually increased, until at length, and during the past three winters, it was large enough to fill the Chapel. The success in point of numbers was unquestionable, while, in regard to pecuniary means, the subscriptions furnished a prospect of future action upon a wider scale.

The advisability of obtaining some large building for the use of this congregation was felt by the members, and that has now been accomplished. The large premises situated at 14, Newman Street, Oxford Street (formerly known as West’s Painting Gallery), were taken on lease for 21 years by DR. PERFITT, and are now available for all Theistic purposes. The large hall, capable of seating 1600 persons, has been chastely fitted up, and a fine organ built by Gray and Davidson. There is also a small hall, to seat 250 persons; besides which there are various rooms to be used for classes, conversation rooms, library, choral singing, &c., &c.

In the year 1858, it was resolved by the congregation that a Society should be formed, to be called “The Society of Independent Religious Reformers;” and, since then, various laws and rules for its guidance have been established. In the prospectus issued by the Committee it was set forth, that the objects of the Society were, (1) To secure the association and co-operation of those persons who are desirous of cultivating the religious sentiment without submitting to the despotism of Creeds, the intolerance of Sectarianism; and, equally, without giving any countenance to the Spirit of Priestcraft—of those persons who pay respect to the dictates of Reason, and reverentially acknowledge the decrees of Conscience; (2) To discover and publish abroad all valuable truths connected either with the laws of Nature, the progress of thought, or the lives of good men, without respect to their country, or the remoteness of their times, so that such truths may be rendered of practical value as guides to a healthful, moral, and manly life; (3) And,

finally, as in the performance of a religious duty, to assist in promoting the moral progress of Society, by co-operating with every body of men who labour either to abolish superstition, ignorance, drunkenness, political injustice, or any other of the numerous evils which now afflict the community.

These objects have been kept constantly in view, as they will continue to be in the future; but it has been no easy matter to decide upon the various methods through which such aims could be realised. In the same prospectus it was stated that, as one means, the Society proposed to establish a Free Sunday Morning Service, at which, beside the usual reading and choral singing, a discourse should be delivered, to be based upon the great facts of Natural and Intellectual Theism. Such a service is now conducted—at 14, Newman Street, Oxford Street—by P. W. PERFIT, on each Sunday Morning, commencing at Eleven o’Clock. A Prospectus of the Discourses to be delivered on Sunday Mornings during the current quarter is herewith supplied.

Among other means of achieving its objects, the Society resolved to have a Sunday Evening Lecture delivered, either Biographical or Historical, or being the discussion of some question bearing upon Religious Freedom of Thought; to arrange for the delivery of Thursday Evening Scientific Lectures; to establish Secular Day Schools for boys and girls, and to open Evening Classes for persons of all ages, in French, German, Latin, and Music. The arrangements for all these are now complete, and there is every prospect of an ultimate success, which will compensate for the labour and loss of time the business has involved.

Annexed hereunto is a list of the lectures and discourses for the ensuing quarter, and those persons who are interested in the progress of Theism, are respectfully invited to attend. The ordinary believers hold it to be a religious duty to be present at the various services; and although not agreeing with their theories in regard to the motives for such attention, it must be confessed that the results of their regular meetings have been such as to warrant the conviction, that Theism would gain ground far more rapidly if those who are of that persuasion met more frequently together. The Committee is aware that there are many who cannot do so; but, of those, the number is large who are in a position to render some pecuniary assistance. They who cannot attend may still subscribe, so as to keep open a Theistic Church for those who can, and for others who need instruction. The costs, for fitting up the premises, have been great; and, although various kind friends have stood forward to help DR. PERFIT in working out his plans, the entire responsibility rests upon his shoulders. This ought not to be, and the Committee feel it to be incumbent upon them to relieve him of all pressure as speedily as possible.

Subscriptions for that purpose—for paying the debt of the Free Theist Church—will be gladly received by H. WHITEHEAD, Esq., 7, Whitehead’s Grove, Chelsea; MR. J. CORFIELD, Farringdon Street; MR. JOHN KING, 104, Bishopsgate Street Within; by any Member of the Committee; or may be addressed to the Secretary, MR. CHARLES SLEEP, 14, Newman Street.

School books, or any of the ordinary maps, slates, and objects, &c., used in tuition, will be very acceptable; and, as a serious attempt is being made to form a library, a donation of books will be esteemed as a great favour. In whatever form assistance is rendered it will be greatly valued; especially at present, while the costs for fitting up the premises presses so heavily upon the respected founder of the Society. Every one who helps at present, while these expenses are still pressing, renders a double assistance.

Quarterly Prospectus.

FREE CHURCH, NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD STREET, SOCIETY OF INDEPENDENT RELIGIOUS REFORMERS.

THE FOLLOWING SERIES OF

SUNDAY MORNING DISCOURSES

WILL BE DELIVERED BY

DR. P. W. PERFITT.



- Oct. 6. Jesus Keeping the Passover :—the loving discourse.
" 13. The Garden of Gethsemane, and the Agony of Jesus.
" 20. Calvary and the Crucifixion of Jesus. Suffering.
" 27. Of the theory that Jesus "descended into Hell." Hades.
Nov. 3. History of the "Resurrection" and the Unbelieving Disciples.
" 10. Ancient and Modern Theories of the Atonement.
" 17. The Character of Abraham and the Nature of his Faith.
" 24. A Second Advent and the Restoration of a Jewish People.
Dec. 1. The Kingdom of God and the Progress of Science.
" 8. The Kingdom of God and the Progress of Thought.
" 15. The History of the "Ascension" and the Heavenly Rising.
" 22. The Church and the World as Related to Christian Theories.
" 29. Time and Thought. A Farewell to the Old Year.

Admission Free - To Commence at 11 a.m.

SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES,

PRECEDED BY "THE TOPIC OF THE DAY."

Will be delivered by DR. P. W. PERFITT.

- Oct. 6. The Apprehension and Trial of Jesus. Tribulation,
" 13. Columbus and the Discovery of America. Civilisation.
" 20. The Pilgrim Fathers and Colonisation of America.
" 27. William Penn and the Growth of the American States.
Nov. 3. The Origin and Aims of the American Revolution.
" 10. Benjamin Franklin as the Citizen, Author, and Man.
" 17. Thomas Paine, his Life, Character, and Writings. Deism.
" 24. George Washington and his Career as a Patriot Soldier.
Dec. 1. Jefferson and the Republican History of the United States.
" 8. William Lloyd Garrison and Dr. Channing. The Slavery Question.
" 15. American Poets and Fiction Writers. Cooper and Longfellow.
" 22. Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Future of America.
" 29. The Southern States and their Resources fairly estimated.

EACH LECTURE WILL BE PRECEDED BY CHORAL SINGING.

To Commence at 7 p.m.

Tickets for Admission to the Evening Lectures may be had in the lobbies.
The Members' Annual Tickets, price £1., which admit to all the Lectures
and Meetings of the Society, may be obtained on Sundays in the Vestry.

These Tickets are to be had also on payment of the Quarterly
Subscription.

The First Series of Scientific
THURSDAY EVENING LECTURES.

Will be delivered by DR. P. W. PERFITT.

SUBJECT:

HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY AND THE DISEASES OF MANKIND,

Illustrated by above 100 Coloured Drawings and Diagrams.

-
- Oct. 3. The relation of Scientific Studies to Human Progress.
„ 10. Science of Physiology ; its Nature, Uses, and Limits.
„ 17. The Process of Digestion familiarly explained.
„ 24. Indigestion ; its Nature, Causes, and Treatment.
„ 31. The Food of Man, in relation to Climate and Occupation.
Nov. 7. Stomach and other diseases caused by an Imperfect Diet.
„ 14. The Heart and the Circulation of the Blood.
„ 21. The Lungs and the function of Respiration.
„ 28. The Lungs and Animal Heat. Origin of Fever.
Dec. 5. Influenza ; Consumption ; its Character and Treatment.
„ 12. The Liver in Health and Disease. Bilious Affections.
„ 19. The Skin and its Functions in Health and Disease.
„ 26. Boxing Day in the Olden Times ; an Entertainment.

Each Lecture to commence at Half-past Eight o'clock.

Admission Sixpence - Reserved Seats One Shilling.

Tickets for the Quarterly Series, Four Shillings.

Reserved Seats, Six Shillings.

The Annual Members' Tickets admit to these Lectures.

A Monday Evening Concert Lecture, illustrated by four voices, will
commence on Monday, October 21st.

Evenings with Burns, Campbell, Dibdin, Shakspeare, Byron, Wordsworth,
Moore, Tennyson, Ben Jonson, &c.

The Conversation Room is open for the use of Members, on Saturday
Evenings, from 7 till 11 o'clock. Each Member may introduce a friend.

The French Class for beginners, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. For ad-
vanced scholars, on Wednesdays and Fridays, at 9 p.m.

The German Classes for beginners, on Tuesdays and Fridays, at 8 p.m.

The charge for the above Classes is Four Shillings per quarter.

The Music Class, Elementary, meets on Tuesdays and Saturdays, at 7 p.m.

The Choral Class meets on Tuesdays and Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m.

Admission to the Music Classes Three Shillings per quarter.

Other Classes are in course of formation.

By Order, **CHARLES SLEEP, Secretary.**

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XXXIX.

THE GERMAN MYSTICS.

WE now turn to the consideration of the German Mysticism, which we say, with all the reformatory tendencies of Thomas à Kempis' teaching, taught the people a wider truth—this wider truth being Love for Man as well as God. Its general character, says Dr. Ullmann, was "that it transplanted Christianity from the intellect into the heart, from speculation into sentiment, "from the school into life—that, apprehending its substance more simply, "morally, and energetically, and presenting it in a German dress, it converted it into a popular cause."* There was not any of the spiritual selfishness of the "Imitatio" in the teachings of the German Mystics; none of the ascetic spirit, or but very little. They taught, that not in solitary contemplation, but in active goodness, was to be found the means of union with God. Sin, said they, consists in selfishness, in making self an object. They opposed Love to Faith, and active virtue to passive innocence. Of course, there is much else in their teachings to which we should object as much as to many of the doctrines of the "Imitatio;" but love to God, love to man, and an actively virtuous life, these are the grand principles which lie at the basis of the German Mysticism.

It would be truer to call this the "New Gospel," than the "Imitatio," for a very God's Word it proved to the German people, arousing them to a new religious life, and an active abhorrence of the priest-made religion of the Church. Among all the causes which concurred in leading to the Reformation, there was none more potent than this; and Luther himself was not slightly indebted to the Mysticism of his time for his religious training. The fact, indeed, is evident to the careful student of the history of the fifteenth century; for no sooner had this teaching spread itself abroad than the work of reformation, which had been progressing slowly for centuries, advanced with rapid strides to its completion. For centuries the work of opposition had been carried on, and destructive influences had been at work; but, though shaken, the Church still stood secure. But when Mysticism came to aid, it was not long ere the whole fabric was overthrown. Why was this? Because the negative work of destruction and opposition is one in which humanity at large will not join. Denounce vice, and you shall have apathetic listeners; but preach a virtue in its place, and thousands will listen gladly. Man requires the positive and the practical; set these clearly before humanity, and, in spite of priestly libels, there is virtue enough in the souls of most men to cause them to follow the teaching.

Another of the great truths propounded by the German Mystics was the doctrine of Free-will. "It is the property of God," says the author of the German Theology, "that He does not constrain any one by force, but "leaves him to do or not to do, according to his pleasure, either good or evil, "and the recovery is accomplished by divinely-appointed means, and according to a fixed method." It was this truth which Calvinism was to overshadow in the working out of the Reformation. The idea of sin, as developed by the Mystics, was in accordance with this doctrine of Free-will, and, for the sake of its truth, is worth looking at for a moment. Sin, they said, was separation from God. "Creatures endowed with a will may, by action, "separate themselves from God, and make self the centre of their being, and

* Reformers before Reformat., ii. 186.

"that is sin. It is sin when the creature wills differently from, or contrary to, God—when it apostatises from the Creator, when it is without God" (for to be without, is to be also against God)—when it inclines itself to "disobedience, to egotism, selfishness, and self-will." Here is a truth far beyond Protestantism; there is nothing here of hereditary depravity or original sin. There is nothing of that "lie," so often preached in the pulpits, by which the fancied sin of a mythical Adam is imputed to all men, and from which unjust imputation they have no power to free themselves, but must await the good pleasure of a partial Deity who may, or may not, take compassion on them. No! the Mystic theology is far above such low views of man and God. In it, man stands or falls by his own acts or deeds. A Jewish Bible, and a so-called Christian theology, may teach differently; good, but shortsighted, men among the Apostles and Fathers of the Church may have viewed the matter in another light; the Reformers may have failed to perceive this truth (and doubtless such are the facts of the case), but what of that, when the Revelation of God Himself, found in history and in our souls, shows us the correctness of the teaching? Yes! man stands or falls by his own action; if he obey the laws of God, then is his salvation sure, and if he obey them not, he suffers the just and necessarily resulting penalty. Yet even in man's disobedience, the Universal Father has provided for his recovery by the suffering which results therefrom. Not God, then, but Man, is chargeable with the sin and evil around us. God's laws are good; if all obeyed them, virtue and happiness would be the result. God, however, leaves man free to obey or disobey, and if he disobey, He has justly (and kindly as justly) provided that he shall suffer. In the suffering is contained a teaching; not God's vengeance, but the good of man is subserved by it; and by obedience man becomes his own Redeemer.

In looking, then, at the German Mysticism as a whole, we find that while it greatly aided the Reformation for which the world was ready, by creating a new religious life among the people, it yet contained truths which the Reformation failed to work out, and which only those who have shaken off the trammels of the Churches have yet accepted. Indeed, much of the teaching of the German Mystics points to truths which must be incorporated in the New Reformation. Its fundamental truth is this: that the Divine and Human are intimately related, and that God reveals Himself in the human soul; a truth dimly perceived by the highest thinkers in all ages; and one by the recognition of which only is religious progress possible; because then Priestcraft, Spiritual Despotism, and thralldom to the ignorance of the past, will be impossible. When men have come to the belief that God speaks to their own souls, that He speaks continually, that He is, in fact, a Living God, then must all Book Revelations and priestly systems become hateful to them, as fetters on their souls' freedom, and each man will see that no priestly attorney should be allowed to come between him and God.

It is only while men look back to a time when they believe men were wiser, holier, better, closer to God,—to a time when God inspired men to speak truths which have forever made their authority paramount over all succeeding generations, that they can consent to overlook the fact that the wisdom and holiness of this present time is equal to that found in the ages of old, and that as many of God's truths find their expression now as in times when humanity was less advanced—or rather many more. Two evils result from this; first, that men undervalue, ignore, and therefore lose the benefit of the truth and wisdom found in the humanity around them; and next, that they

lose faith in themselves, as being essentially inferior to the men of the past. It is this want of self-reliance on the part of men that has made Spiritual Despotism possible. This idea, then, of God in man—God dwelling close to the souls of all men, which lies at the basis of all theistic Mysticism, is a noble truth, and one which it will be well for the world when all men recognise. In the recognition of this alone is it possible for humanity to comprehend its true dignity, and therein, and therein only, lies the possibility of those achievements, that constant progress onwards to higher, and ever higher, spheres of thought and action, for which man is adapted, and which his Creator intended him to compass and accomplish. A true conception of human dignity is, in fact, at once the guarantee against many evils, and an earnest of every kind of virtue, and mental and moral progress.

Mysticism, as developed in connection with Christianity, is useful as disproving the ridiculous claim made by the orthodox that Christianity should be looked upon as radically different from all other religious systems; and also as pointing out the possible developments of the Christian Ideas. If we find that the Christian Ideas are capable of variation and development, if we find that Christianity grows with the growth of the ages, that new ideas and new truths are welded into it as man progresses in knowledge, that the Christianity of one age differs materially from that of another, the logical and necessary inference is that Christianity, like all other religions, is the product of the human intellect, and not a gift of Infinite Wisdom, that it is a growth out of, not an importation into, history. That this is so, no one acquainted with history—not, perhaps, as it is commonly written, but in all its bearings, as exemplified in the growth, intellectually, morally, socially, and religiously, of the various nations—will for one moment hesitate to acknowledge. We lay no stress on the changes wrought in the Christian Ideas by the agency of Priestcraft, although they might afford some support to the argument; but content ourselves with asking this question, Does Christianity, as taught by Christ, as expounded in the Gospels, satisfy the religious wants of the man of this Age? That it does not is a fact recognised by the highest thinkers in this age. At the same time no one can doubt that the grand principles of Love and Self-sacrifice which pervade the whole teaching of Christ, must ever form a part of all true religion.

One by one, as the Ages have rolled, the great religious truths which man now owns have been discovered and enunciated. Long ages it took to give a spiritual form to man's idea of God; anthropomorphism entered into all the ancient systems of religious teaching, and God was reduced to a likeness to man, or rather (to speak correctly), the highest ideal of humanity was taken by men to represent the Divinity. Then came the idea that God is a spirit; not as a revelation from heaven, but as the outgrowth of man's intellectual, moral, and spiritual progress. As with the conception of the Deity, so with all the other religious ideas, the same growth is perceivable, corresponding with man's advance in other respects. Shall we suppose, then, that Christianity is a finality, any more than any other religion which preceded it? Its grandeur consists in this, that it has so much of eternal truth about it, that on the sympathetic, the emotional side of man's nature, it gives almost perfect satisfaction, but that it can be looked upon as a religion satisfying all sides of man's nature, and fitted for a complete Philosophy of Life, is certainly not the case.

Neither Christianity nor Mysticism can be looked upon as a complete Philosophy of Life; they both appeal only to one side of human nature.

Among the many developments of Christianity found in the history of the Churches on the side of doctrine, Mysticism is (as already hinted), that which kept the closest to the teaching of Christ. Love lies at the basis of both; both appeal to the feelings rather than to the reason; both ignore, to a great extent, the practical side of life. But the practical side of life has its claims upon the Religious Teacher, and therefore we say, neither Christianity nor Mysticism can be accepted as a complete Philosophy of Life, although both teach much which must go to form a part of it. The Religion of the Future, that which we, as Religious Reformers, seek to establish, is one which shall satisfy man on every side of his nature, and may serve him as a guide and help in every relation which belongs to him as a human being—every condition in which he shall find himself placed; a Religion of the whole human nature, satisfying the intellect, loyal to the intuitions of the soul, and not oblivious of the fact that the Great Creator has made man with passions and physical functions and capacities. Such a religion will seek to instruct man on all sides of his nature, will accept all truth, whencesoever and however it may come, and will consist in doing the truth more than in believing it. It is worth while for all honest-minded men, incumbent on all truth-seekers, to earnestly inquire, Is Christianity such a religion? We speak not now of the Christianity of the Churches, that all candid, unprejudiced minds must be aware is not such; but we speak of Christianity as it was taught by Christ. The answer to that is, as we conceive, a very simple one. Christ taught the truth, but not the whole truth, he taught the truth as far as he saw it, and not seeing the whole, naturally mingled it with some error. So evident is it that Christianity does not include the whole truth, that the more candid of the thinkers within the Church, the Maurices, the Jowetts, the Milmans and others, find themselves forced to admit as much. Dean Milman has put this admission into plainer language, perhaps, than any, in the introduction to his History of Latin Christianity.

Our business, as Religious Reformers, is to develop Christianity in accordance with the wider knowledge, the more mature wisdom of this present century. We seek not, as our enemies say, to overthrow Christianity, but to accept all the truth Jesus taught, and to work in his spirit, as he would have worked had he lived now. A grand, loving, earnest, truthful soul was in the man Jesus, he was the last who would have confined men in their search for truth in any particular, or have refused to accept any truth because it was new. Living in a dark age, he knew not much that science, human thought and energy in various fields, have disclosed to us; in these days he would have been the first to condemn that narrowness found amongst those who pretend to be specially his followers, and the last to blind his eyes, as they do, to any part of God's Revelation to man. That Christianity is capable of development, is at once the condemnation of those who pretend that it is comprised in any of the theories and systems of the Past, and the proof of the wisdom of Jesus. Christ was no system-monger, but a free-thinker, and we look upon those German Mystics, at once forerunning and outstripping the religious progress achieved by the Reformation, as men who were working in his spirit. We hail them and him as among the great and glorious spirits of the Past, who earnestly sought the spiritual progress of mankind, and anticipated in their teachings much truth not yet worked out, or incorporated in the religious systems accepted by the majority of men.

JAS. L. GOODING.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

BY G. L. BAUER.

WE should place the Book of Job either in the age of Solomon, or in that immediately subsequent. In the ideas contained in the Book of Job there is a striking similarity to those which are found in the Book of the Proverbs. Several commentators are of opinion that the former is the joint production of some of the wise men who lived during the reign of Solomon, or soon after his death.

This book is the most sublime and beautiful poetical work of the Hebrews: it surpasses all their other writings in the excellence of its religious sentiments, especially in the purity of its notions concerning God. It may with justice be styled the masterpiece of antiquity. An author who, in a period of general ignorance, could so far expel from his mind the prevailing prejudices and superstitions of his country, and could work out for himself a belief and morality so comparatively pure and reasonable, must have attained to a high degree of intellectual advancement. The subject of the poem is wholly religious, but it is deeply melancholy, owing to the gloomy views entertained by the author of an hereafter; to him the future is wrapped in an appalling darkness. The object of the work is to explain in what manner the sufferings of the good may be reconciled with the existence of a just providence, and also to afford strength and consolation to the afflicted. Job, the hero of the poem, is an Arab; his opponents are Arabs or Idumeans: they are ignorant of Israel's faith and Israel's worship. Their God is the God of all men. The name Jehovah is employed by the narrator, who in the prologue speaks of himself as an Israelite; but, in the dialogues between the several personages who are introduced in the drama, the name of Israel's national God is carefully avoided.

The opinions of the writer are expressed by Job; excepting always those hasty and impatient exclamations, which are uttered by him when irritated by acute bodily suffering, or when heated by controversy and the unjust accusations of his adversaries. The opponents of Job adopt the popular notions of a Providence, and contend—that to suppose that God does not reward virtue, and punish vice, is to impeach the Divine justice:—that a just God cannot do otherwise than secure to the righteous the fruits of their well-doing, and visit the wicked with the curse of His displeasure;—that, consequently, whoever is harassed by misfortunes, sickness, poverty, or other ills, though indeed to human observation his conduct may appear not only innocent, but praiseworthy, he is nevertheless to be regarded as receiving the just retribution of guilt;—that, if a man experience adversity, he is assuredly guilty in the sight of God. Job held other and more enlarged views of this subject; they will be considered in a distinct section.

§ 1.—NOTIONS OF JOB'S ADVERSARIES CONCERNING GOD AND PROVIDENCE.

Four opponents of Job, each sustaining his individual character, are introduced into the poem. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar agree in their defence of the divine Providence. The arguments employed by Elihu, a younger speaker, differ but little from those used by his companions; but he is much more moderate in his language, and is desirous of acting the part of a mediator.

ELIPHAS.—God is the only God. He is therefore called either Eloah (in the singular number, and not as formerly Elohim), or else, the Almighty. He is the Creator and Governor of the whole earth. The weather and all the phenomena of nature depend on Him. He brings the machinations of the wicked to nought, and rescues the oppressed. "Shall a man be more pure than his Maker."* "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number: who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: to set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is

* Job, iv. 17.

"carried headlong. They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night. But He saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty."*

God is just and holy. "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?"† "Man more just," so that he shall be able to charge God with injustice in the awards of fate: "more pure," so that he shall be able to charge his Maker with the violation of holiness in rewarding vice.

There exists an intermediate order of beings between God and man, His angels or messengers. These are not free from failings. They appear to men in night visions in order to instruct them. They have no tangible form; they are spirits, phantoms, who are only recognised by the soft breath which precedes them and announces their approach. "Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? Behold, He put no trust in His servants; and His angels He charged with folly."‡ "Behold, He putteth no trust in His saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight."§

The providence of God is shown in the good fortune which attends the innocent, and the evil fortune which pursues the guilty. This is the contested point—this is the position which it is the object of the Book of Job to confute. "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed."||

Afflictions sometimes befall the good and pious, but they are merely chastisements permitted by God for a while, in order to promote the accomplishment of some wise though secret purpose. Such chastisements are always of short duration. "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee."¶

The punishments of God may be averted by repentance and amendment of life. "If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver. For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God."**

A man's righteousness cannot be profitable to God: man cannot by obedience and worship add to the happiness and perfection of the Almighty. "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?"††

Notwithstanding the justness of this sentiment expressed by Eliphaz, his views of religion and virtue are strictly selfish.

(To be continued.)

* Job, v. 8-15.

† Ibid. iv. 17.

‡ Ibid. iv. 12-18.

§ Ibid. xv. 15.

|| Ibid. iv. 7-9. See, also, v. 3-6; xv. 20-35.

¶ Ibid. v. 17-19. See, also, 21 27.

** Ibid. xxii. 23-26.

†† Ibid. xxii. 2 3.

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THE ROMAN CHURCH.*

By F. H. HEDGE.

It seems to me, on many accounts, important that we should not underrate the present significance and actual strength of Romanism; but chiefly on this account, because a just estimate of the power and position of that Church is necessary in order to appreciate aright the Roman Christian idea; and a right understanding of the Roman Christianity is essential to a right understanding of our own—of Protestant Christianity as distinguished from the Roman. To know ourselves truly, we must know ourselves relatively, we must measure ourselves with others. It is good for us occasionally to collate these different versions of Christianity, and to judge ourselves by comparing the old and the new. Whatever may be our impression of the errors and corruptions of the Roman Church, it will hardly be denied that a Church which has reached such a point of command, and acquired such breadth of dominion, and, what is more, has stood its ground against such a combination of contrary forces as the two last centuries have levelled against it, has, on the whole, a good right to be and to thrive; that, with all its corruptions, there must be some sterling excellence in such a Church. There must be a good deal of truth and a good deal of virtue at the bottom of such success. Protestants may talk about "Babylon," and all that, but a power like this never yet based itself on mere corruption. In the long run, success does not side with falsehood. God will not stand by a lie for ever; and certainly of this Church it may be said, in the old Hebrew phrase, that the Lord of Hosts hath been on her side. It is worth our while to study the elements of this success, not for the sake of adopting them,—that would be like adopting another man's eyes or nose,—but in order that we may judge correctly of the comparative merits and defects of the two systems.

One very essential element in the success of Romanism is its lofty consciousness, its ecclesiastical consciousness, the Church spirit, the sense of Divine right. Protestantism, as Mr. Martineau very justly characterises it,

* "Out of the Cloud" is unavoidably postponed, with other matter, till our next number, by reason of the Editor's indisposition.

"has no self-knowledge." "Possessed by a spirit which it did not understand, aiming at one thing and realizing another," it "has always mistaken its own nature and place in history." But Romanism has always understood itself, has always known its end and seen its way. Always conscious of its strength, and confident in its destiny, it has moved onward with no faltering step in the path of empire to which it conceived itself called in him who was to have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. It conceives itself called to rule the nations by ruling the mind. The consciousness of such a call was manifest long before the Roman Bishop became the head of Christendom, in the early determination of the Western Church to authoritative settlements of theological questions. The genius of the East inclined to speculation, to free thought and large discourse in matters of religion. The West, ordained to deal with barbarous and unreasoning tribes, who could accept a final proposition, but could make nothing of theories, found it necessary to have opinion fixed in comprehensive and immutable statements. The Greek mind judged of truth by an intellectual standard, and would have every point philosophically legitimated; the Western judged by the standard of expediency, and wished to have all things ecclesiastically settled. Whether philosophically correct, or not, mattered little in their estimation; opinion must be canonically correct, by all means. It would have no open questions. It had the sagacity to perceive that these questions of metaphysical theology admit of no final solution by the intellect, and that the only way to secure any show of unanimity was by a solution *ab extra*; which, if it did not satisfy the intellect, might do what was next best—keep it in order. The long controversy between the orthodox party and the Arians, which agitated the fourth century, was in some sort a struggle between the Western and Eastern Churches, the West being mostly united on the orthodox side. It was from that quarter that the great Bishop of Alexandria derived his chief countenance and support. In fact, though all the œcumenical councils were held in Asia Minor, there is reason to believe that the prevailing influence in those councils, and their decisions, represented the opposite end of the Mediterranean more fully and distinctly than they did its eastern borders.

A more striking instance of the consciousness, and a very essential condition of the ecclesiastical power of Rome, is the subordination of the secular to the spiritual. This Divine order, which Christianity inaugurated almost as soon as it had governments on its side, the Roman Church has never, in principle, abandoned to this day; and the newest controversy within the limits of the Church turns on that very point. The indebtedness of mankind to the Christian Church, as a barrier against secular tyranny, has never, I think, been acknowledged to its fullest extent. Such a thing as a public censure of government was unknown in the Roman empire since the dictatorship of Cæsar, until Christians assumed the purple. The first Christians, it is true, did not obey the laws which compelled them to violate their conscience, but they did not criticize them. No one dreamed of criticizing government, until government, by becoming nominally Christian, became amenable to a higher law. And when Hilary of Poitiers and old Athanasius fulminated their invectives against Constantius, the Roman world stood aghast at the boldness which dared to judge, where others had only learned to obey. The subordination of the secular to the spiritual was consummated, at a very early period, in the Western Empire. And such was the ascendancy of the Church feeling not only over private interest, but over the moral sense,

that, even when the government acted justly, the Church overruled its decisions, if they seemed to affront its own dignity or to contradict its own interest. The Christians at Callinicum had wantonly destroyed a Jewish synagogue. The Emperor Theodosius very justly sentenced them to rebuild it at their own expense. Ambrose opposed the decree as an insult to the Christian Church, which ought not on any pretence to be made instrumental in promoting the cause of Judaism. He defended the conduct of the Christians in this act. They had only retaliated, and that very imperfectly, the ancient persecutions of the Jews. He took the responsibility upon himself, and insisted that the authors of the outrage should be held guiltless. And the ruler of the world submitted to his dictation, as he did on that other more momentous occasion, when, for eight months, the church at Milan was closed against him until he had accomplished the penance exacted by the inflexible bishop for his Thessalonian enormity.

Closely connected with the Church feeling of which I speak, and perhaps a product of it, at all events a very important constituent of the power and success of that body, is the fervent faith of its members in the articles and doctrines of their communion. We hear of the unbelief of professed Romanists among the educated classes in the European capitals. I suppose that to be somewhat exaggerated. But allowing the fact, the sceptics at most are reckoned only by hundreds, the believers by millions. And such believers! The faith of the Romanist is not, as that of the Protestant is apt to be, a mere theoretical admission, or a practical acquiescence, but an assurance amounting to the uttermost possible degree of certitude. Said an individual of that Church to a member of one of the Calvinistic Churches of the city in which I live, "Why do you exclude Unitarians and Universalists from your Church?" The answer was, "Because we believe them to be in error on points of vital moment in religion." "But do you know that they are wrong?" "Why, we think we have sufficient reason for believing so." "But unless you are absolutely certain, you have no right to exclude them." "How is it, then, with you?" retorted the Calvinist; "you excommunicate all Protestants without distinction." "Yes, because they are all alike wrong in matters of faith." "That is, you think so." "Not at all," said the Romanist; "there is no thinking about it; we simply *know* that you are wrong as well as we know that you are alive." Such has been in all periods the faith of Rome—unquestioning, unreasoning, unwavering,—the faith of the will. It was faith like this that overthrew the Irminsul on the banks of the Lippe, and compelled the iron Vikingr to receive the baptism of Ansgar. It was this that motived the great reaction of the fifteenth century, that rolled back the tide of the Reformation, and secured to the Vatican the fairest portions of Europe,—France, Austria, Bavaria, Poland, Belgium,—already on the point of secession, and assigned to Protestantism an early boundary line, beyond which it has made no conquest for two hundred years.

Still another source of the peculiar power of the Roman Church, is the preponderance which it gives to the feelings over the intellect, the ascendancy it accords to the devotional over the dogmatic in religion. It addresses the sentiments more than the understanding. Romanism puts theology in the background and worship in the foreground, devotion first and theory last. The Romanists as a body, it must be acknowledged, are more devout than the Protestants as a body. Their churches, in the countries where that faith prevails, are always open; and every day, and almost every hour of the day, you may find there worshippers who have turned aside from their vocations

to spend a few moments in prayer. And when matins or vespers sound, you see them flocking to the church which is nearest the scene of their labour, in the guise and condition in which the summons finds them—the labourer with his frock and his sabots; the maid with her basket or pail placed beside her as she kneels, the mother with her babe at her breast, the child, like Goethe's Margaret, "Halb Kinderspiel, halb Gott im Herzen." There they kneel, while the din of the world, heard faintly without, like the breaking of the distant surf, gives one the feeling of an island of sanctity in a wild, roaring, godless sea; and the solemn aisles and vast spaces, dwarfing the human figure, supply a new and solemn perspective to human life; and the "antique pillars' massy proof," and the plaintive chanting of the priests, and the curling incense, and the sculptured saints and "ever-dying" martyrs, produce an impression of unearthly and eternal reality projected into this mortal, which no other experience awakens in a like degree.

Romanism addresses itself to the sentiments. Not only so, it addresses itself to the senses and the sensuous understanding. Instead of cold abstractions, it gives sensible images; it deals in the concrete, it puts things for words. It does not descant on transubstantiation, but uplifts the consecrated wafer, and bids the people kneel to the *præsens numen* in the host. It does not discuss the subject of Atonement, but puts a crucifix before them wherever they go, "by the way, in the places of the paths." It does not argue the question of intercession, but points them to the Virgin. It does not philosophize on the efficacy of prayer, but puts a string of beads in their hands, and tells them, so many Aves for this thing, and so many Pater-Nosters for that. It is also greatly indebted for its influence to establishing an intimate relation with the whole of life. It does not dismiss its disciples at the door of the church, but follows them to their homes with its ordinances and its sacraments. At home and abroad its eye is upon them, its banner is over them, its symbols attend them. These are its elements of power.

"THERE are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in 'thy philosophy.'" So says the poetical, sensitive, Hamlet to the matter-of-fact Horatio. And, indeed, there are more things in earth, at least, than the philosophy of many others than Horatio can in any wise explain. Here is Mr. Brown, a man of excellent judgment in trade, knows when to buy and when to sell, obeys to the letter the politico-economical maxim about buying in the cheapest, and selling in the dearest, market; he never made a wrong entry in his ledger in his life, and, as a business man, is perfection itself. Now for all this we blame not Mr. Brown; on the contrary, we esteem Mr. Brown a very "respectable" person. In his sphere Brown is an excellent man, but neither is the highest excellence his, nor does his sphere comprehend the entire of Life's Philosophy. Such men have a pat little theory of life which is fitting and suitable for their little souls; but then, unfortunately, they are too apt to drag this little theory of theirs about with them, and every man who is too long or too short, too high or too low, for this, their standard, is set down as a fool, a fanatic, a rogue, or something of that sort. This is a thing which cannot be too much condemned, seeing that so many amongst us are led by men of the Brown stamp; these "practical men," so called, being too apt to thrust themselves and their opinions impudently forward. So it is that many a noble heart has been broken, many a grand soul misunderstood, many a man, who should have stood a hero to his time and to posterity, been reviled as a fanatic or a knave.

J. L. G.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XL.

SAVONAROLA.

ACCORDING to some men's views of Religion, it is a thing which has nothing whatever to do with this world. Their teaching is that politics, science, education, and other matters pertaining to various spheres of thought and action among men, are to be viewed as things altogether, if not alien to, at least quite apart from, Religion. The doctrine we believe and teach is exactly opposed to this. We believe that Religion is intended to sanctify and elevate all the pursuits of men. We do not believe that to be Religion which divorces itself from human life as a whole. The Religion we would have men accept—while it directs the soul upward to God, while it points men to a blessed Hereafter—does not ignore their duties as men and citizens. We would teach such a Religion as will make men better citizens, better fathers, better, in short, in all the relations of life, than without it they can possibly be. An altogether different Religion, in fact, to that taught in the Churches and Chapels, where the object is not to teach men how to do their duty in this world, but to keep their minds bent upon what are called “spiritual things,” in which, rightly considered, there is very little spirituality. We would create a Church of the Future which shall effect what the Churches of the Past and Present have entirely failed to effect—a real elevation of humanity to that position which belongs to it of right, and for which God designed it.

Jerome Savonarola, above all others among the Reformers of the Past, was cognisant of the truth that Religion has to do with this world as well as the next, and, both in word and action, taught men that the political and everyday affairs of men have a religious side to them. We shall see, in looking at his life, that he was a man above creeds, whose religion was one of action, and who believed that the best way of getting to Heaven was by performing God's laws here on Earth. It is in this respect that the Protestant Churches have been greater failures than in any other, having occupied themselves with miserable theological quibbles, and not with the life of the people, or the means of progress for man. The old Church did to some extent, and still does, enter into the everyday life of those in communion with it; herein, indeed, lies the strength of Roman Catholicism—this is the secret of its power over those who are sufficiently ignorant to accept its false teachings, or willing to submit themselves to the intellectual slavery it enforces. Let us recognise the fact, however, and not be so unjust as to deny that Roman Catholicism had some truth mixed with its many errors. Let us accept the truth which it, in common with all that has been widely accepted at any time, has for us, and make it part of a nobler religious system; always remembering this, too, that no Church can ever be strong which ignores the claims of humanity in its common and everyday relations.

On the 21st September, 1452, Savonarola was born in the City of Ferrara. Looking back through 400 years into that city of splendour, luxury, and vice, we may realize, dimly though it be, somewhat of the strange world into which he had come; and of the equally strange home. The father of him, Nicolo, was a gay, reckless, spendthrift courtier,—a hanger-on in the Ducal Palace of Ferrara,—a strange father for such a son; his mother was one of those gentle, loving, pure-souled women, whom we sometimes find allied to men like Nicolo, who, while he loved her, was continually outraging her feelings and her tastes. Early was the boy Jerome thus brought into contact with

influences which were to affect his strong soul with enduring hate of a world which had led his father astray. We can see the young Jerome gazing pityingly on the mother whom he loved so much, as she wept scalding tears at her husband's sins and folly. There gradually grew up in the mind of the boy an intense hate for the servility and lasciviousness of the world around him; and he gladly turned away from the festivals and pageants, and the poisonous atmosphere of the Court, to the kindly counsels of his mother.

Nor must we forget, among the influences which went to form the character of the young Jerome, the company and conversation of the fine old man, his grandfather, [who held the office of physician in the Ducal Court, and at whose house he spent most part of his time until he was ten years of age, and by whom the young Jerome was early initiated into much abstruse learning. It is probable that the difficulties into which the extravagance of the father had brought him and his family, led to the grandfather taking charge of the young Jerome. The death of the good old man threw a deep gloom over the earnest soul of the boy, and in the life within himself, which for some years he was thereby forced to live, we must look for the source of the stern and somewhat gloomy character of the man. Once only was he roused, and that was at the call of young love. A fair young neighbour, a daughter of the "noble" house of Strozzi, had long been watched and loved by him; but "never could a Strozzi match with a Savonarola," such was the indignant answer she returned to his suit. If we blame her pride, we cannot blame her prudence; for the younger son of a half-ruined hanger-on at the Court of the Ferrarese Duke was indeed no likely match. With a bitter smile, Savonarola flung away his youthful fancy. It should be remembered, however, that such things leave their mark on the lives of such as he. Love had for a moment thrown a false halo round the world in which he lived, and mayhap, if she on whom he had looked and loved had been a kindred soul, if she had returned his love, a different fate in life would have been his; he might have been content, as many others were in that evil time, to find within his own domestic circle escape from the pollution of the outer world. Savonarola was not the man to love twice in his life; with the loss of his first love all the deep passion he had felt was thrust back into the depths of his soul, and he thus early learnt the lesson how to bear. For one whole year he sought to do this in the face of the world; silently pursuing his medical studies, and seldom speaking; mixing in the gay circles who assembled at his father's house, only as a silent spectator; and avoiding all places of public resort.

Outwardly calm and contemplative, the stream of his life flowed on; but, as he himself has left on record, that was a year of unequalled suffering which followed the destruction of his young hopes. His mother, gentle and tender, could sympathise with his sorrow, but she was incapable of understanding the struggle that was now passing in the gloomy depths of that strong young soul. Domestic griefs she could understand, but her mental vision was all too narrow to comprehend the feelings with which her son looked upon that world "all upside down," in which every "virtue and fair usage" was "spent and overthrown," and in which "no living light" could be found: and in bitter and solitary musings, finding vent now and then in rough and trenchant rhymes, young Jerome found his only relief. No light dawned upon his soul; he knew not as yet the mission which future years had in store for him, and so got to believe that the only thing left for him to do was to fly from the pollution and the wickedness. Long he struggled against this, but was at length determined by the preaching of an Augustinian monk.

It is the evening of the 23rd April, 1475. Savonarola has come to the determination to enter the cloister. He and his mother are sitting alone, occupied with their thoughts; till now he has not known all that he would feel at leaving her who had loved him as only mothers can love. Nor can he bring himself now to break the matter to her. He takes up his lute and plays, but, as if his spirit spoke in the music, so mournful is it, that his mother turns and says, "My son, this is a sign of parting." He answered her not, but continued playing in a different key; and full at heart, presently bade her good night. The mother's forebodings were prophetic; she never saw him more. The next day, being now twenty-three years old, he entered the Dominican Convent at Bologna, to perform his noviciate.

In the silent watches of the night he had left his home, and began his lonely journey on foot. In a letter to his father he excused himself for thus hastily leaving the paternal roof. "The reasons," he says, "which induce me to become a monk are these, the great wretchedness of the world, the iniquity of men, the violence, the adultery, the theft, the pride, the idolatry, the hateful blasphemy, into which this age has fallen, so that one can no longer find a righteous man; and because I cannot endure seeing virtue extinct and ruined, and vice triumphant." He had fled from the wickedness of the outer world, only to find as bad, or worse, in the cloisters to which he went. With a melancholy satisfaction he had contemplated a life of peace and fellowship with religious souls, and it is easy to imagine the wrath which took possession of the earnest spirit of this man when he found that the monkish garb was but a cloak for sensuality and vice of the worst kind. As a layman he had been accustomed to look with reverence upon the priesthood, and, although it is unlikely that he knew not that there was some vice amongst them, yet he believed that there was much of goodness. But now all illusions of the kind vanished, and, in the bitterness of his heart, he was wont to say, "Would you have your son a wicked man make him a priest. Oh, how much poison will he swallow!"

As yet, however, Savonarola is not prepared to commence the work of a Reformer. He laments the condition of the Church polluted with all vices. "But to denounce her condition," he thinks, "is only to excite fruitless enmity." "Nothing remains," he sadly says, "but to lament silently, and to hold fast the hope of a better future." The spirit of the active Reformer has yet to be born within him. Seven long years of sorrow and doubt have to be passed through ere the thought has shaped itself clearly to his soul, that he must work, as well as hope, for a better future. Shall we wonder at this delay? We shall not, if we are among those who have been called upon to cast away our childhood's faith at the imperative call of riper knowledge and wiser views. In the gentle mother's teachings this man had gained an altogether false estimate of what the Church was. He had believed that in the monastery he would find an oasis in the desert of a wicked world. And when doubts entered his soul he long hoped against hope ere he allowed them to resolve themselves into certainties. Nor, when he fully recognized the facts as they were, was it at all easy for him to settle for himself the best course to be pursued. There was good reason, too, for his fear that he might excite "fruitless enmity."

An outraged moral sense had driven Savonarola from the world, and an outraged moral sense led to his denunciations of the priesthood. There was very little of the speculative theologian in this man, and based upon morality, as the Reform he attempted was, it necessarily spoke to wide sympathies,

and led him to direct his efforts to alter and improve the state of Society as well as that of the Church. He cannot properly be called an opponent of the Church; he sought rather to recall it to a sense of what he conceived to be its duty. His earliest work was to denounce the corruptions he saw around him, and call forth the religious emotions of men in aid of a moral reform; afterwards as his views widened, extending his efforts as a religious teacher to an amelioration of the political condition of his countrymen, he ever preached duties rather than doctrines. "We worship God," he used to say, "not only to honour Him, but to obtain from Him our happiness. A good life being a better way of obtaining blessedness than sacrifices and ceremonies, we must allow that a good life is much more true worship than exterior worship." This man's religion was a practical religion, and in that respect differed no less from the orthodoxy of to-day than it did from the superstitions accepted as religion in his own day.

If we were dealing with Savonarola in a polemical spirit, we should doubtless have to object to much of his doctrinal belief; but let us rather recognise the mighty truth he taught, one no less necessary to be learnt in these days than in his own, namely, that true religion, a real worship of the Great Father, consists not in forms, and ceremonies, and doctrinal beliefs, but a noble life, a daily performance of duty. If Savonarola doubted any of the Church's doctrinal teaching, he doubted much more its value as a moral agent among men; and so was content to concentrate his attention upon the practical view of religion. He might, in common with many other equally honest men, honestly believe the dogmas and speculative teachings of the Church to be true; but he could not shut his eyes to the fact that its practice had sadly degenerated from righteousness and morality. If he saw not, as we see, the close connection between the theological teachings and the immoral practice, let us not, therefore, blame him, but remember that there are but few, even in the present day, who have opened their eyes to the same truth. Would that we could have a few of the men of the Savonarola stamp in our pulpits now—men who would be content to teach a practical religion and leave doctrines alone! If they at least did not all the good it is possible to do, they would abstain from doing much evil. How Savonarola sped in his work as a Reformer, we shall see next week.

JAS. L. GOODING.

THE BASSAVA PURANA.

THE Bassava Purana is in seven books, containing (in the original Telugu dwipada) 12,600 lines; it is an evident imitation, in some points, of the Brahminical Puranas; for instance, the introduction declares that to pronounce the three syllables Ba-sa-va, and the syllables Gu-ru, is a means of obtaining heaven; and that faith (bhacti) is the great foundation of good. The book purports to be a series of legends regarding various devotees (bhactulu), or zealots, who attained faith; and details the miracles performed by these "worthies." These (in imitation of the Brahminical mode) are narrated by the god Siva to his wife Parvati and the sage Narada. The book opens with homage paid by Siva to Bassava, who is declared to be an incarnation of Nandi (the Apis, or Sacred bull); and a few of the latter legends are concerning his confessor (Guru) Basavesa, closing with his death; but the greater number of the stories have nothing to do with Bassava, and merely describe the devotions of various saints, who lived in ages previous to his

birth. These are introduced as being narrated by Bassava, or in his presence. The first book describes Bassava's parentage and birth, and then gives the details.

In his eighth year, his supposed father, being a Brahmin, wished to invest him, as usual, with the Brahminical thread; appointing him a (guru) confessor or teacher. But Basava replied, "The great Siva is my teacher, and I desire 'no other.'" The father tried to persuade him that the Bramhachri state into which this rite introduces children, is itself emblematic of Siva. These words greatly offended Bassava, who replied, "You speak of ordinary Brahminism and 'faith (blacti)', as if they were one and the same; whereas the yajna rites declare Brahminism and faith to be quite distinct. There is no specific form of God in a visible shape; he is dead in his works who believes that the Deity can dwell in a specific form. Bassava then leaves his father's house, accompanied by his sister Nagamamba; they go to the house of his father's brother, whose daughter, Gangamba, he marries. Bassava then departs with his wife and sister to Sangameswara, the abode of his patron god; while offering his prayers here, the god Siva appeared to him, embraced him, and stood before him with joined hands; lauding him, and encouraging him to continue steadfast in the faith; and declaring that even an enemy who adores the image is to be regarded as a friend; he desires Bassava to shun all intercourse with such as adore not the image. He further said; "Look upon every Jangam as being verily myself."

The second book describes the reign of Bizzala, king of Calyanam, whose minister was Bassava's uncle; on whose death Bassava was made minister; he accepts office on the condition that the king will relinquish the Jaina creed, and become a worshipper of Siva. Bassava now devotes himself to hospitality to the Saivites, and washes the feet of his guests. He appears to have at this time contemplated making some innovations in the religion. He having declined the Brahminical initiation, the legend declares that, at the time of his birth, the god Siva himself descended, and breathed the spell (Namasivaya) in his ear. In other words, he framed or adopted the formula for himself, and now communicated it to his nephew Chenna Basavana; this was the son of the sister Nagamamba: but here is no mention of his other sister, Padmavati, whom the Jainas say Bizzala took to wife. The legend here asserts, that Chenna Bassava is a secondary form of Bassava himself; the teacher and the pupil being one.

Then follows a discourse intended to prove that faith, (blacti) is all in all; that this is the one boon to be sought; and that faith makes the (blacti) adorer equal to the Deity. At the close of this conversation, Allama kisses Bassava, to free him from the power of sin. He then is "resolved into the 'image' (liug-aikyam), which here is interpreted that he vanished: but this praise is elsewhere used to denote death. Bassava then devoted himself to mystic abstraction (Voga-sastram), and continued his bonnteous treatment of the Jangams, "gradually being more and more absorbed in the image, as 'camphor is absorbed by fire.'"

The next legend describes some robbers who gained access to Bassava by wearing on their necks beans, which they feigned were (lingams) images. On examination, the beans are found to be changed into images. On another occasion, he converts a heap of corn into pearls. Many miracles are related regarding other saints; and some are narrated by Bassava himself.

In the third book, Bassava distributes in charity the treasures of his master the king. But the treasury is still as full as ever. This introduces

another story, wherein a minister who had embezzled money given him to purchase horses, collects some foxes, and turns them into steeds.

The next set of legends is regarding the (*mudha bhact*), or "silly saints," whose feats certainly rival those of the simpletons (*ahmaq*) described in the Mussulman pious legends. These idiot monks, who have bid farewell to common sense, always receive peculiar honour among Hindus of all creeds. Several of them are called *Minda-Jangams*, or libertines and absolutely do not know right from wrong. This exalts their merit; as the force of their faith atones for every other deficiency. One of these is a pious woman, who ponders how it should happen that Siva should have every relation excepting a mother. She reflected on the grief she suffered at the loss of her own mother; and, imagining it might comfort him, she longed and prayed to become his mother. She thereupon adopts a boy; but, to try her faith, he occasionally abstains from the breast as a fast. She imagines the boy to be unwell, and as he will not tell what ails him, she is about to knock her brains out (as usual in those fables), when he bursts out in divine form as Siva, and offers to grant her every wish. She makes no request, and he bestows on her (*sayujiam*) eternal happiness; and she is now worshipped as Saint *Ammavva*; having been a mother to Siva.

The next legend is that of "Cannappa the (*boya*) savage." This story is remarkably popular; it is narrated in various books, and many Hindus at this day are named after this worthy. In the *Sri Calahasti Mahatmyam* the story is given in great detail, but may be summed up briefly. Cannappa (who is one of the "silly saints") is a forester, who, in a dream, beholds Siva in the form of a hermit; and is directed to plunge into the forest to seek the god. He next day pursues a wild hog into the wood; where it vanishes, and he finds an image of the lingam. Here the god appears to him; the lad, recognising him, invites the god home. The god was silent, and Cannappa imagined this might be the effect of hunger; so he went to bring him venison. Another story is here introduced to show how the giants turned themselves into wild animals, in the hope that, being slain by the blessed hand of Cannappa, they should obtain (*moxam*) heaven. Cannappa now daily brought flesh of wild hogs and deer, with which he fed the god; but a Brahmin hermit, who lived near the spot, was offended that Cannappa, being a pariah or outcast, should thus gain the favour of Siva, while he himself daily exercised an unprofitable devotion, and offered fruits and milk to the image. Here the Brahmin introduces the following story: "Once upon a time, a devout spider built her web so as to shade the image, which a devout but jealous elephant tore down and daily bathed the god, which he supposed to be a more acceptable homage; but the spider became a snake, and got into his trunk, and killed him. Now I, a weak Brahmin, must thus contrive by cunning, to kill this brawny forester. While he thus plotted, the god determined to put the forester's faith to the proof. There was, as usual, a single eye painted on the image. From this eye, Cannappa perceived tears were flowing, which he wiped away with his shoe, and then filled his mouth with water, which he spirted over the image, which now poured forth a stream of tears. He begged to know what was the matter, whether the god was in want of food for his wife and children. Perhaps, said he, you want another eye; if so, take one of mine! so saying, he pulled out one eye, and presented it; but the image still wept, so he pulled out his other eye. Whereupon the god appeared in his true form, and restored his eyes."

A baron, named *Sacal Esa Madiraz*, ruled the town of *Nambi*; he was a

great musician, and devoted his talents to the praise of Siva. Paying a visit to Mallarusu, a saint who lived at Sri Sailam, he admired that sacred hill, and particularly the quaking or dancing bullocks (here is given a long description of Sri Sailam). It is here stated that Mallarusu was in fact Malie Arjuna, a personification of Iswara; and to try the faith of his visitor, the god assumed a strange shape, wherein neither his head nor his feet were visible. The pious Madiraz adored him as incomprehensible. The god was well pleased, and brought him into his temple, where he invested him with the image, and told him that, as long as he dwelt on earth, he must be subject to the (carma-cada) law of works. But Madiraz refused to return to earth, and thereupon the god caused a tumma tree to spring from the soil, and under it he directed him to dwell. While he lodged there, the god again approached him, in the guise of a herdsman, and began to hew down the bough that gave him shade, while he sat at his devotions. Madiraz was angry, and forbade him to commit such a sin. The swain replied, "Thy being angry is a sin; for he who gives way to anger is a sinner. If this annoys you, you may go and seat yourself elsewhere. Have you never heard the adage of the flood, at which a bear came swimming down the stream? A man thought it was a sheep, and, in attempting to catch it, he was seized by the bear. There you sit here in the hope of vanquishing (maya) the earthly passions, and are yourself within their power, as the man was seized by the bear." Madiraz, however, persisted in reviling him, while he replied by preaching patience, at last the god blazed forth undisguised. Thereupon Madiraz entreats to know how eternal happiness was to be attained; and is answered, that he must again descend to earth; that at present there was on earth a great saint, Bassava; "and," said he, "go and listen to his preaching, and I will shortly summon thee to this place. Go now to the city of Calyanam, where thou shalt find Bassava." On hearing these words, the saint saluted the god, and the next moment found himself at Calyanam; where Bassava had, by a dream, been warned of his approach, and received him with honour.

The fourth book contains the life of a celebrated saint, named Madirala Maçaiia, who was a washerman by trade, and one of Bassava's earliest proselytes. He performs great miracles; a touch of his hand slays an elephant; and a second touch revives him. This man and other devotees lay themselves under a vow to cherish or aid the Jangams in some specific mode, such as washing, making clothes or shoes, &c., for them. A variety of such stories are here inserted as being related by Maçaya to Bassava. One saint receives a sack of corn from a woman; at his touch they vanish, and at the same moment all the wealth of the sender disappears; this being intended as a punishment for her feeling pride at making so liberal a donation. Another saint is gifted with Siva's eye (as destructive as that of the caliph Vathek), and entering a Vishnu temple, he consumes the luckless statue of the god! Another devotee, named Çhiri Tondan Ambi, is extolled as having, with his wife, hospitably received Siva (disguised as a Jangam); and at his desire to be feasted on human flesh, he and his wife roast their son for dinner. On sitting down to table, the god desires them to call their child to dinner. On being called, the boy re-appears alive. Hereupon the god shines forth, and carries the whole party home with him to Caillasa. It is believed that this Tondan Ambi was in this manner carried seven times to Caillasa from Canchi; and is to repeat the journey at a future period.

The next story is regarding Mira Mindu Mainer, whose faith exalted him so greatly, that Siva (by the name Valmik-esa) became his servant; nay, his

slave and pandar. The other devotees hereupon curse the god and his pet, as equally infamous. "At these words, the god was so frightened, that he fled, and took his pet with him; they stole round the idol, and passing under its front, they ran away into the jungle." Siva's follower, Nandi, expressed his wonder that a god should suffer such distress; but Siva replies, "I and my followers are one; nor can I be free from grief while they suffer. Indeed, on a former occasion, when a devout woman was ordered by the king to produce a militia man, as the fee on her land, I myself went and served as a soldier furnished by her." This "shows the wonderful power of faith; the good deeds of a former birth would never suffice to obtain such a boon. Wert not thou proud, O Nandi, thou wouldst attain oneness with me." Here Bassava is informed that Nandi ultimately became thoroughly humble; and this gained him the honour of canonization. "And next to faith, charity is the great means: for example, this Nandi, after bestowing all he had on the poor, proposed even to bestow his body in alms. He began by cutting off his hand; whereupon he was at once borne to Cailasa." To this succeeds a series of miraculous stories, inculcating bountifulness to the poor; some devotees, after reducing themselves to poverty, attempt suicide; whereupon they are, as usual, carried to Cailasa. Several of these tales are interesting, but they are very long. One of these men is visited by Siva, disguised as a sudra, who refuses to honour the god adored by his Jangam host; the zeal of the host is aroused, and he attempts to slay his guest, who thereupon displays his real form, and carries the zealot to Cailasa. The narrative concludes with the moral, that faith avails nothing if clogged with pride. Pride ruined all the pious acts of Nandi, who therefore long lingered on earth. The book closes praising Bassava, as really the god Siva.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

BY G. L. BAUER.

(Concluded from p. 220.)

BILDAD.—Bildad agrees with Eliphaz, and repeats the same arguments, only with more vehemence. God is almighty, just, and holy. "Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?"* "Dominion and fear are with Him, He maketh peace in His high place. Is there any number of His armies? and upon whom doth not His light arise? How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?"†

Whoever suffers makes atonement for the sins he has committed. The justice of God is proved by His punishment of the guilty. It invariably fares ill with the wicked and well with the good, either sooner or later. "If thy children have sinned against Him, and He have cast them away for their transgression; if thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; if thou wert pure and upright; surely now He would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase. Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will He help the evil doers: till He fill thy mouth with laughing; and thy lips with rejoicing."‡

ZOPHAR.—Zophar is the most violent and the most ignorant of Job's opponents. He repeats what the others have previously asserted: that God is almighty and just: that consequently He cannot but punish the wicked; and that they who would escape the just retribution of their sins, must reform their conduct. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than

* Job, viii. 3.

† Ibid. xxv. 24.

‡ Ibid. viii. 4-7, 20-21; see, also, viii. 13-19; and xviii. 5-21.

"hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and "broader than the sea."* "But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall "not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost."† "If thou "prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards Him; if iniquity be in "thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. "For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, "and shalt not fear."‡

ELIHU.—Elihu, though rather too vain of his knowledge, speaks more temperately, and, on the whole, more justly, than Job's other adversaries; but he is unable to give any satisfactory explanation of the debated point. God is the Creator of the world. If He withdraw His breath men die and return to the dust. According to the ancient mythus man is formed out of the earth, and God's breath breathes in his nostrils. "Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who "hath disposed the whole world? If He set His heart upon man, if He gather "unto Himself His spirit and His breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man "shall turn again unto dust."§

The character and attributes of God are portrayed by Elihu, with a poetical beauty which cannot fail to excite our admiration. God is eternal and almighty; the thunder is His voice, and His right hand is armed with lightning. He is omniscient, incomprehensible and immutable. He is veiled in light. He is holy and just, rewarding every man according to his deeds. His attributes are to be discerned in the wonderful operations of nature, though we are ignorant of the laws by which they are regulated. "(God directeth) His lightning unto the ends of the "earth. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of His excellency; "and He will not stay them when His voice is heard. God thundereth marvel- "lously with His voice; great things doeth He, which we cannot comprehend."|| "Behold, God exalteth by His power: who teacheth like Him? Who hath en- "joined Him His way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity? . . . Behold, "God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be "searched out. For He maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain "according to the vapour thereof: which the clouds do drop and distil upon man "abundantly. Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise "of His tabernacle? Behold, He spreadeth His light upon it, and covereth the "bottom of the sea. For by them judgeth He the people; He giveth meat in "abundance."¶ "Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: far be it "from God, that He should do wickedness: and from the Almighty, that He "should commit iniquity. For the work of a man shall He render unto him, and "cause every man to find according to his ways. Yea, surely God will not do "wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment. . . . For His eyes are "upon the ways of man, and He seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor "shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. For He "will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with "God. He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in "their stead. Therefore He knoweth their works, and He overturneth them in "the night, so that they are destroyed."**

God warns, exhorts, and instructs mankind in dreams; but He does not appear upon the earth, or give any visible manifestation of His presence, since man cannot endure the splendour of His majesty, nor the terror His greatness would inspire; neither does He talk with man, since man's faculties are too limited to admit of his conversing with the Almighty. "Why dost thou strive against Him? for He "giveth not account of any of His matters. For God speaketh once, yea twice, "yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep "sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears "of men, and sealeth their instruction, that He may withdraw man from his "purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and "his life from perishing by the sword."†† "Touching the Almighty, we cannot

* Job, xi. 7-9.

† Ibid. xl. 20; see, also, xviii. 4-29.

‡ Ibid. xl. 13-15.

§ Ibid. xxxiv. 13-15.

|| Ibid. xxxvii. 3-5.

¶ Ibid. xxxvi. 22-23; 26-31.

** Ibid. xxxiv. 10-12; 21-25.

†† Ibid. xxxiii. 13-18.

"find Him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: He will not afflict. Men do therefore fear Him: He respecteth not any that are wise of heart."*

The consideration most frequently presented to us, and most continually dwelt upon in the Book of Job, is that of the immeasurable distance between the Creator and the creature—God's omnipotence, and omniscience—man's ignorance and littleness. How opposed are such views of God to those representations of the Deity, and of His familiar intercourse with man, given in the early Books of the Old Testament! It is difficult to believe that the most enlightened of the Hebrew sages did not regard these ancient traditions as the myths of their nation.

All diseases and temporary sufferings are the chastisements of God—the wicked are punished as long as they live. Eliphaz and Elihu admit that afflictions occasionally befall the righteous, but contend that they are never of long duration. "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain."† "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more."‡ "Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: He is mighty in strength and wisdom. He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor."§

God profiteth nothing by man's righteousness, and suffereth nothing from his iniquity. This opinion was also expressed by Eliphaz—"Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him? or what receiveth He of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man."||

§ II.—RELIGIOUS OPINIONS OF THE WRITER OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

Job's adversaries formed many just conceptions of God and of His attributes, but they failed in their endeavours to explain the distribution of good and evil. The opinions of the author are found in the calm reflections of Job; in the Prologue and the Epilogue; and also in the answers which God is represented as giving to Job out of the whirlwind.

Representations of God.

God is the Creator of man and of the universe; the breath of man's nostrils is the spirit of God. "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit."¶ "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils."**

The description of the creation is very similar to that given in the Book of the Proverbs—God laid the foundations of the earth and fastened the corner-stones upon nothing. The stars sang together and the sons of God—the angels shouted for joy on the day of creation. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy waves be stayed?"††

Here, as in the writings of Solomon, the wisdom of God is personified. She dwells in a palace whose entrance is known to God only. She attended at the

* Job, xxxvii. 23-24.

† Ibid. xxxiii. 19.

‡ Ibid. xxxiv. 31.

§ Ibid. xxxvi. 5-6.

|| Ibid. xxxv. 6-8.

¶ Ibid. x. 8-12.

** Ibid. xxi. 3.

†† Ibid. xxxviii. 4-11.

creation when God appointed the rain, the thunder, and the lightning. "Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. For He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure. When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder: then did He see it, and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out."*

Attributes of God.

God is omnipotent and omniscent; His existence is immutable and incomprehensible. Man can form but a very inadequate conception of His power. "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered? Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in His anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number."† "Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days."‡ "Lo, these are parts of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?"§

In seasons of deep dejection and great bodily suffering Job charges God with injustice, and with the capricious exercise of His power, in continually favouring the wicked, and deserting the good.|| For such expressions of impatience and distrust, Job is reproved by God. "Wilt thou also disannul my judgments? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?"¶

Such were not, however, Job's abiding convictions: we find him soon after reposing, with firm reliance, on the justice of God. "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."** "Yet in my flesh," while I yet live, "shall I see God:" not as now will He manifest Himself to me as my consumer and destroyer, but as my preserver and redeemer.

Government and Providence of God.

Job's opinions of the government and providence of God differ from those which are held by Eliphaz and Elihu, and their two companions. He agrees with them in believing that all earthly events are under the especial guidance of the Almighty, and that all the vicissitudes of human life are to be attributed to the will of God, but he denies the position of his adversaries, that prosperity is to be regarded as the reward of virtue, and adversity as the punishment of vice. On the contrary, he contends that God dispenses good and evil, as He sees fit, according to His own good pleasure; and that, however incomprehensible His ways—however inscrutable His purposes may be to man, the Divine government is regulated by infinite wisdom, and whatever God does is just and right. He, even in the hour of deep affliction, thus expresses his own confidence in the justice of God: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."††

Job commends entire submission and resignation to the will of God, and the steadfast pursuit of virtue, even during the time of suffering and the season of adversity, as the highest wisdom.

The passages which contain the opinions of the author respecting the providence

* Job. xxviii. 20-27.

† Ibid. ix. 4-10.

‡ Ibid. x. 5.

§ Ibid. xxvi. 14; see the entire chapter; also xxxviii. and xxxix.

|| Ibid. ix. 11-24; xii. 6-9; xiii. 17-28; xxi. 5-26.

¶ Ibid. xl. 8.

** Ibid. xix. 25-27.

†† Ibid. xiii. 15.

of God are much too long for quotation. We must refer our readers to the Book of Job, particularly to the following chapters—vii., ix., x., xii., xxxviii., xxxix.

In the concluding chapter we find Job commended by God, and his opponents condemned. "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath."*

Spirits, subordinate to God, are introduced in the beginning of the poem. God is represented, according to the patriarchal manner, as a father who assembles His family around Him, and enters into discussion with them. They are called "the sons of Elohim." They stand before God to receive His commands and do His pleasure. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah."† Some of these spirits are well disposed towards mankind, while others regard the actions of men merely in order to note their evil deeds and report them to God. "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, and Satan came also among them to present himself before Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered Jehovah and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."‡

This Satan, who appears among the sons of God in heaven, does not exactly correspond with the Satan believed in by the Jewish people at a later period, after their sojourn among the Chaldeans, and after they had become acquainted with the Ahirman of Zoroaster's philosophy. The Satan here spoken of is probably that evil spirit or angel believed by the Hebrews to be employed by Jehovah as the messenger of evil; for before the exile they attributed both good and evil alike to God. It is the same evil spirit who came over Saul,§ and who also went forth as a lying spirit to persuade Ahaz to go up to Ramoth-gilead.||

Satan has considerable power, which he holds in subjection to God. He can afflict men with death, with severe bodily diseases, and all kinds of evils. "Jehovah said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered Jehovah and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And Jehovah said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of Jehovah, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown."¶

Freedom from sin, and obedience and submission to God are much insisted upon. Job is called the servant of God because "he was perfect and upright, a man that feared God and eschewed evil."** Sins are atoned by the sacrifices offered (not indeed by the priests, for among Nomadic tribes there was no priest), but by the father of the family. "And the sons went and feasted in their houses every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting had gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."††

* Job, xlii. 7.

† Ibid. i. 6.

‡ Ibid. ii. 1 2.

§ 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

|| 1 Kings, xxii. 22.

¶ Job, ii. 3-7; see, also, the whole of chap. i.

** Ibid. i. 1 and 8.

†† Ibid. i. 4-5; see, also, xlii. 7-8.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GREAT UNPAID AND POACHING.

"GOOD WOMAN, you cannot go in, indeed you shall not go into the room until I have been to ask Mr. Lester to see you."

"But I can't bide here, I won't bide here. Oh, do let me go in to see the gentleman, and then I knows all will be right."

"There, now, don't go about to make such a dreadful noise. Mr. Lester will be sure to see you. He is as good as his mother was, God rest her soul, and he'll do all you want; but you must get a bit quieter before I can ask him to see you, or you won't be able to tell him your business. Is it so very dreadful? There now, don't cry so, but do sit down and get quieter."

These words were followed by an outburst of wailing that sounded through the rectory passages, until it reached Lester and Ella, making them start from the chairs on which they were seated at the breakfast table. Ella immediately went forth to inquire into the cause, and found Jane busily employed vainly endeavouring to pacify a coarsely clad woman, who was standing up in the kitchen.

"Here, Miss Ella," cried Jane, glad to see her approach, "do come and speak to this woman. I can't do anything with it. All that I can find out is that she is in terrible trouble, and wants to see Master George."

"No," shrieked the woman, "I don't want to see him, or any Master George, I want to see the Rector. It's Mr. Lester I want. They say as he is good to poor-folk, and I haven't a friend to help me now. God help me if he won't. Let me see him, and he will save my husband. Oh, my poor husband!"

"Yes, my good woman, he will see you, and whatever it is right for him to do he will do; but," continued Ella, "you must compose yourself before you go into his room. I am his sister, and perhaps, if you can manage to

tell me your troubles, I shall be able to help you to make him understand what you want. He will be pleased to help you, so shall I."

"No, no, no," cried the woman convulsively, "there is nobody but the Rector can do it. We never had a body to say kind words to us afore he came here, and there's nobody but he that will dare tell the big-folk the truth. Oh, my poor Bill, my dear Bill; if Mr. Lester don't help us, they'll kill my poor husband atween 'em, I know they will."

Having tried in vain to elicit from the woman some outline of her story, Ella informed Lester of the circumstance, and he rang for Jane to show the applicant into his study.

Without pausing to shut the door, the woman threw herself upon her knees, crying,

"Oh, Sir, save my husband, do save my poor husband," and, incapable of saying more, she burst into a violent fit of grief. After this had somewhat subsided, Lester elicited from her that her husband, who, through illness, had been long unemployed, would shortly be placed before the magistrates upon a charge of poaching, or, at least, of being unlawfully in possession of a hare, which had been taken from him by the constable and gamekeeper.

Having advanced thus far, and believing himself to be in possession of all the leading facts of a poaching case, Lester began to lecture the woman upon the sin of stealing. He had frequently heard the poorer classes argue that, as hares ran wild, they could not be the property of one man more than another, consequently, that all should be equally privileged to kill, or compelled to abstain from killing. He had not studied the subject, neither did he understand the action of the game laws; although he had frequently been pained by the manner in which certain offenders had been dealt with, but, on the whole, he favoured the existing system—perhaps, merely because it was a system. As a rule, when speaking to the poor about poaching, he identified it with stealing, and denounced it accordingly. But now, when lecturing this poor woman, he was made to feel the necessity of modifying his style of language.

She, however, protested that her husband was not a thief, was not even a poacher, and that he came into possession of the hare in a perfectly innocent manner, which turned out to be a fact. On the preceding evening, returning from the Union Workhouse, to which he had gone in search of out-door relief, he saw a hare sitting by the roadside, and, prompted by the natural spirit of the hunter, he threw a stone, which laid the animal senseless; pouncing upon it before it recovered, he gave it a knock against a gate, tucked the dead beast beneath his smock-frock, and proceeded on his way, debating whether he should sell or eat it. There was much need of the latter, for he had been a long time upon the sick list. His cottage was situated near a boggy piece of land, and with that originated the ague-fevers from which he suffered. As the father of five children, he could not afford to be out of work, but the ague was more powerful than his poverty, and kept him so. He had been a sober, steady, industrious, man; and, when Lester had made inquiries among the neighbours, which he immediately proceeded to make, he found them unanimous in declaring that Walters was neither a liar nor a poacher, and that, if he said he had knocked the hare over in the road with a stone, they were sure that it must be true. But the constable and gamekeeper, who met him with it, were of quite a different opinion.

Having satisfied himself that the story told by the woman was substantially true, Lester resolved upon doing his best to procure the release of her

husband. To achieve that purpose, he made his way to the old market house, in the upper room of which, the "great unpaid" assembled to administer justice. In the retiring-room he found several country gentlemen, all busy discussing the quality of their horses, the character of the crops, and the prospects of the Russian war. He was received by them with great warmth, especially by Ralph Poinder, who was that day to sit as the presiding magistrate. Without hesitation Lester broached the subject then uppermost in his mind, and stated his conviction, that not only was the man innocent, but even had he been guilty, so hard were his circumstances, that in Christian charity he should only be admonished and then dismissed.

"Dismissed," roared Colonel Towers, an old Fox-hunter, "why, if he were dismissed, I would not promise that a head of game would be left in the shire by this day twelvemonth. No! no! No dismissal, but let the fellow have a turn in gaol, and that will frighten a score of fellows from poaching."

"That's exactly my opinion," put in Squire Bezley. "I would soon stop poaching if I had my will. Every fellow caught with a brace or a hare, I'd transport, and that would soon bring the remainder to their senses. Labourers don't mind a month in prison, but they are frightened at transportation."

Captain Oscott suggested, "that probably it would not be advisable to stop poaching altogether. I am one of those," he continued, "who think that positive good and not merely evil results from poaching. The risk run by those poacher fellows, through the many dangers by which they are surrounded, added to the fact that their calling is pursued in cold dark nights, begets a certain hardihood of body and mind, with a perfect contempt of danger, that is highly laudable and worthy of esteem. I never knew, or heard of a poacher who was a coward. Even if a fellow is given to tremble at danger, he soon ceases when fully entered upon the poacher's calling. They all make capital soldiers; of this, I speak from long experience. I had three of them in my company in the Affghan war, and not only were they the boldest fellows in the lot, but they seemed to impart their dare-devil spirit to all the rest. So that I would not kill poaching altogether, but try only to keep it within bounds."

Many of the listeners to this speech were greatly astonished that an officer known to be remarkably severe upon all offenders, should undertake to plead thus distinctly in favour of poaching, but the fact was that he had read something of the kind in an old number of the "Sporting Magazine," and merely repeated it as his own. Some who heard it, being ignorant of the source of his inspiration, were quite as much inclined to support as to oppose the theory. But Ralph Poinder cut the matter short by asking whether the old race of housebreakers and footpads were not brave men, and whether upon the same theory they should not be preserved from ruin?

Lester suggested that probably they who generally discussed the question were led to their conclusions more by their preconceived opinions than by the general bearings of the facts. "To my mind," he continued, "the game laws seem to be well-calculated to create criminals, not to reduce their numbers. My experience in the matter is very limited, but from what I have seen in Crosswood, I should say that half the number of those who are transported for burglaries began their career of crime with poaching."

"All criminals begin with something," interposed Oscott, "but we do not always condemn the object which first attracted them."

"No," answered Lester, who perceived the meaning which his language badly conveyed, "but the present condition of the labourer, and his relation

to the preserves of his master, are peculiarly adapted for developing the latent passion for acquiring food without labour. My receipt for making a poacher is very simple. Take a poor unmarried man, or even a married man with a family, whose natural sense of right and wrong has been but slightly cultivated, keep him cool in winter by fixing his wages at a sum below what is requisite to obtain fuel, and from the same cause he will be kept hungry; place that man in the midst of game preserves, and let him know that hundreds are ready to purchase all that he can snare, without calling him a thief, or deeming him sinful, and if he do not turn out a poacher then he will prove a model of virtue. I would that, for the sake of the poor, all the game in England were at the bottom of the Atlantic. But, gentlemen, what has this to do with poor Walters? He is not a poacher."

"But the hare was found under his frock," said Bezley.

"And I protest against discussing the case before we have heard the evidence," observed Pinder. "So, gentlemen, with your permission, I will lead the way into the court."

The worthy magistrates, all game preservers, took the hint, and Lester entered the room to seat himself at the solicitor's table.

When Walters appeared at the bar, it was pretty evident he was not one of those who fed upon partridges, or who had fallen into the habit of making free with the property of their neighbours. He was a tall gaunt man, with a pallid half-starved looking face, rounded shoulders, slouching gait, and a marked serf appearance. He wore not the ring of Gurth around his limbs, but seemed to have worn it round his spirit until that better self had been literally broken and crushed. A blue checked shirt, red handkerchief, greenish smockfrock, corduroy trowsers, and a pair of highlows, made up his dress; except that he carried in his hand an old straw hat, which, like all else about him, was worn down to its last. Catching at a knot of hair, which constituted his forelock, he ducked down, intending the strange swaying motion for a bow to the arbiters of his fate.

With all his seriousness, Lester could hardly avoid laughing at this ridiculous attempt at politeness, but before the emotion had spread itself over his cheek, he was stricken with a sense of sorrow by the inexplicable shade of grief which rested upon the hungry face of the prisoner. There was nothing intellectual or attractive in his countenance, but much which, under other circumstances, would have been called repulsive; now, however, that tears ran down the deep furrows in his cheeks, the consciousness of his inward agony chased away all other thoughts, and raised him immensely in the Rector's estimation.

The charge was preferred against him, in the regular manner, by the policeman and the gamekeeper, and when it had been amply proved that the hare was found under his smock frock, and the case for the prosecution had closed, Walters was called upon to make some answer to the charge. This, however, was beyond his humble powers. All he could say was—

"For the love o' God, good gentlemen, have mercy upon me. Be merciful unto me. I didn't go a poaching, indeed I didn't. I never poached. I hot her with a stone, and did'nt mean to kill her. Oh, for the love o' God, good gentlemen, have mercy."

But there was none to be shown. Upon the bench there sat several good men, charitable and generous; many honourable and well-intentioned men, who could not designedly have injured a worm, but under other circumstances would have subscribed liberally in order to relieve the distresses of the

prisoner. Yet now that he was there as a poacher, their bowels of compassion were closed against him, and their passion as game preservers caused them to view him rather as a personal enemy than as a poor suffering man. The chairman, Ralph Poinder, whispered into the ears of those nearest to him, and it was evidently their intention to deal with the case very severely. Lester saw this, and leaning over to the man said some few words in a tone so low that they were not heard by the court. But the prisoner heard them, for he turned suddenly round and cried out :—

“ Yes do, Mr. Lester, for God’s sake do get me out of this, and I’ll swear never to touch another hare, not if she lays dead at my feet.”

“ Gentlemen,” said Lester, “ the prisoner has placed his defence in my hands, and, although unused to the forms of a court, I cannot doubt of your listening to my observations, neither can I doubt that you will make every possible allowance for the difficulty of my position, should I violate your usages. I ask you to give me a hearing, because I could not rest in peace—I could not ask God in my nightly prayer to protect me, were I to leave this court without trying to win the prisoner’s discharge. He is one of my flock, and, as an English clergyman, as a Christian man, I feel bound to make an appeal in his favour. Will you permit me to address you ? ”

“ It is entirely out of order,” said the Chairman, “ because you are not in the legal profession. Yet, out of respect for your position, we will suppose that you are speaking as a witness to character. You may proceed.”

“ Then, Sir,” said Lester, “ I shall not venture to touch the legal side of the question ; that I leave entirely in your hands, merely soliciting you to read the law as leniently for the prisoner as the performance of your duty will permit. I shall merely appeal to you as men, to remember the weakness of our common human nature, and, as true Christians, to bear in mind that charity and forgiveness of injuries belong to our daily duties. That man, as I have discovered, has suffered much through ill health, and probably there is not another in Crosswood who has endured more. Frequently, when we sat before the well-covered board, he with his wife and children crept with empty stomachs into bed, hoping to sleep away the painful sense of hunger. It is true that the Union gates were opened for him, but had he entered, his wife and children would have been parted from him ; and if the feelings of the husband and the father rose into rebellion against the separation, we will not judge him unkindly for his error. But if it be granted that he violated the law by killing the hare, must we not grant, also, the greatness of the temptation ? Which of us, placed in his circumstances, as I have made them known to you, could have resisted it ? Did he break God’s law when carrying the slain beast home for his family ? If we are to ask of heaven forgiveness of our sins, must we not all desire them to be as light as that for which he now seeks forgiveness from this Court ? ”

“ We sit here,” interposed Bezley, “ to administer the laws of the land, and ought not to permit you to insinuate aught against them.”

“ I do not argue against the law of the land, neither is it my desire to lead men to violate it, but I cannot avoid perceiving, that when our poor human laws clash with those of Heaven, it becomes a positive duty on our part to side with the latter ; and if you send this man unpunished away, then will you be acting in accordance with the law of God. Unto whom much is given, from him much shall be expected ; but what has been given unto that man ? Nothing save the promise of rest when he sinks into the grave ! ”

(The chapter to be continued.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XLI.

THE VOICE OF REFORM IN ITALY.

SAVONAROLA commenced his mission of Reform as a preacher. His first attempt was a failure, but of this we say nothing; for he was one of those men to whom failure is but the road to success. We look at him, therefore, in the full tide of his popularity at Brescia, where, even as an Arnold had done ages before, he has undertaken to raise his voice against the vice and corruption of priests and people, and to denounce woe to a Church that has forgotten its mission. An earnest purpose and an unconquerable will have triumphed over physical incapacity, over sneers and opposition, and he now stands before the people as the orator whose fire-winged words enter into their very souls, and as the prophet who sees a coming judgment, and foretells a day of woe. Let us take a passage from one of his sermons, which, while it furnishes an example of the mingled strain of reproach and prophetic denunciation in which he indulged, shows, also, the boldness with which he attacked spiritual wickedness in high places.

"From the beginning of the world (so spake Savonarola) a wonderful and "inscrutable series of Divine judgments has appeared, wherein have been "revealed, not only the fearful anger, but, also, the patient loving-kindness of "God. Not otherwise will it be in our corrupt times, from which all the "virtues have vanished, and in which all the vices are rampant. Those sunk "in vice will be invited to conversion, and mercy will be offered if they turn "to virtue, but justice will be, at length, executed on them if they persist "and persevere in vice. The popes have attained, through the most shameful "simony and subtlety, to the highest priestly dignities; and, even then, when "seated in the holy chair, surrender themselves to a shamefully voluptuous "life, and an insatiable avarice. The cardinals and bishops follow their "example. No discipline, no fear of God, is in them. Many of them believe "in no God. The chastity of the cloister is slain, and they who should serve "God with holy zeal have become cold, or lukewarm, or worse. The princes "openly exercise tyranny. Their subjects encourage them in their evil "propensities, their robberies, adulteries, and sacrileges. But, after the "corrupted human race has abused for so many centuries the long-suffering of "God, then, at last, the justice of God appears, demanding that the rulers of "the people, who, with base examples, corrupt all the rest, should be brought "to heavy punishment. And let them not think to escape it." Here, then, was a man who dared to speak the truth, with a voice of power, without fear, and without favour; and to prophesy that evil and oppression should not last, but that a due and just punishment should overtake those who wrought evil, however high their station, or great their seeming power.

"I never said I was a prophet, yet this I say, that God sent me to "prophesy a scourge to Italy; which, if I do, I lose my body; if I do not, I "lose my soul." Such was Savonarola's own account of his prophetic mission, about which there has been more said in depreciation of him as a charlatan and a quack, than in respect of anything else he did or said. Was he a prophet? Only in the sense that many others, who have seen clearly that sin necessarily ends in misery, that departure from obedience to God's laws is sure to bring a compensatory punishment, can be said to be prophets. Savonarola clearly saw that the social state was such that it could not possibly continue, and he prophesied no more than this. 'But,' say some, 'he 'represented himself as God's messenger, in this matter.' He did so; nor

needs he any excuse for this. He was God's messenger, and he firmly believed himself to be no less. He was God's messenger, we say, as is every man who brings a new truth home to the common apprehension, or who, with a voice of earnestness, denounces the evil thing, and clears a way for men's acceptance of the Good and the True.

Shall we not say that all such men are really inspired by God? There are some who start with horror at the idea of attributing inspiration to Savonarola, and there are many more who deny inspiration to any who have lived since a given date—who speak as though God's spiritual treasury was exhausted some centuries ago. We are not among those; we can as well believe in the inspiration of men in the present day as in that of the men of the past. If Paul were inspired, why not Savonarola? But, say some, Do you, then, believe that all that Savonarola did and said was the work of God? Nay, not so; neither do we believe that all that Paul did and said was God's work. We can see serious defects in both, we recognize falsity in much that was said, written, and believed by each of them; while we cannot be blind to the fact that, as earnest workers out of good for man, as men who sought to spread God's truth abroad (so far as they saw it), they were literally inspired by the Spirit of God. Every man who earnestly strives to obey His Will ever is so. God is ever near to the soul of the man who seeks to do His Will, and perform His Laws. Why, then, it may be asked, do such men ever make mistakes? why, being inspired, are some of their actions absurd, some of their sayings folly? This is a question which, until we have arrived at a more perfect knowledge of the relations between the Divine and human, cannot be fully answered. Thus much, however, we may say, that by Inspiration is not to be understood a process of education, but a spirit imparted by the Deity to His child; and when the soul is properly attuned for the purpose, finding expression in various ways, here creating the great poet-teacher, there the earnest worker for Truth and Goodness.

In the year 1487, when Savonarola was at the height of his popularity and success at Brescia, he received an invitation to assume the office of Prior of the Dominican Convent of San Marco, at Florence, from Lorenzo "the Magnificent." The motives of Lorenzo in giving this invitation were doubtless derived from the celebrity which had now attached itself to Savonarola's name; he wished to add one more to the notabilities whom, as the patron of art and literature, he had gathered together in Florence. Savonarola accepted the invitation, hoping that, as prior of San Marco, his voice would be more powerful in achieving that reform which he had already sought to bring about in the monasteries of the Dominicans—at least, he knew he would have the opportunity of working out a reform in San Marco itself. Thus much he afterwards accomplished, leading thereby to the secession of the monks under his governance from the main body of the order, a thing which had much to do with the enmity displayed towards him by the Dominican body in the latter part of his career.

Other motives, there can be no doubt, also, led to his decision in this matter. Florence had become, under the government of the Medici, one of the most powerful of the Italian States, but, at the same time, one of the most depraved. The luxury, which had come as the result of its wealth, brought its never-failing fruit, in the shape of depraved morals among the citizens. If, therefore, Savonarola could do aught to reform Florentine manners, he would not alone do a good work there, but one which would stand conspicuous to all the world, and would affect all Italy. He had no thought of becoming

the sycophant and partizan of the Medician house—he accepted the office, the invitation having come unsought, because he thought that his means of doing good would be thereby enlarged. It is necessary to bear these considerations in mind in judging of the after-conduct of this man, so much censured by Roscoe, and others, on the ground of base ingratitude. In Florence, at this time, the tone of society was entirely corrupt. The people were not alone immoral, but servile, too. The wealth and magnificence of Lorenzo had become objects of worship to the degraded Florentines, and, while flattering their vanity, and ministering to their vices, he had succeeded in overthrowing the ancient republican constitution, and establishing himself as a despot. Savonarola looked upon this state of things with sorrow, and felt that, before he could hope to do aught in reforming the social state of Florence, it would be necessary to exorcise this evil spirit of servility to wealth and magnificent vice. At least, he would set an example to the people in so far that he himself would not truckle to the Medician despot—of this he was determined. If, as the preacher, he were to be successful in his aims, at least, he must not begin by paying court to the idol of this degraded people. Thus it will be easily understood that the state of mind in which Savonarola assumed his office and duties at San Marco was one of opposition to the spiritual and political condition of things in Florence. As the teacher of truth, as the pioneer of a better condition of things, he felt bound in every way to protest, both by word and action, against all that he viewed as the predisposing causes of the evils existent among the people there.

It had been the constant custom for the new Priors of San Marco, on their induction into the office, to pay a formal visit to the palace of the Medici, as a mark of respect to the reigning family, who also were the patrons of the cloister. Here, then, was an opportunity for Savonarola to mark his sense of the servility which had allowed the Medici to become masters in Florence; moreover, he felt that he could not consistently do this and pursue the path he had marked out for himself as the right one. He accordingly omitted to comply with the custom. On being remonstrated with, Savonarola asked, "Who has raised me to this dignity, Lorenzo or God?" Like many other religious enthusiasts, Savonarola believed that all that befell him was the work of special providence on the part of the Deity. If, however, it was not God, it could not be said to be Lorenzo, consistently with the rules of the Church, which allowed not of lay patronage. Savonarola believed it was God, and no one could say it was not. "Let us, then," he said, "render thanks to God, to whom they are due, and not to mortal man!"

Lorenzo felt that Savonarola was no common antagonist; and, being a wary man, he thought it well to seek by any means to enlist him in his service. But Lorenzo little knew the man he had to deal with. In pursuance of his design, however, he determined to visit the Prior, as the Prior would not visit him. Lorenzo accordingly made frequent visits to the Church of San Marco, where Savonarola preached, and by what he heard felt only the more convinced that it was necessary to bind this man to his interests. Lorenzo will therefore visit the cloister itself; of course, dignity forbade his doing so ostensibly to see the Prior. He accordingly made a point of walking in the garden more than once in the hope of meeting Savonarola, who, however, carefully avoided him. One day the brethren inform the Prior, "Lorenzo is in the garden!" "Has he desired my presence?" "No!" "Be it so! let him tarry and continue his devotions!" The monks look

aghast ; but Lorenzo has to depart without seeing the Prior. So, as courtesy fails, he will try bribes. Savonarola's answer to his bribe was a public one, delivered from his pulpit : " A good dog barks always, in order to defend his master's house, and if a robber offers him a bone or the like, he pushes it aside, and ceases not therefore to bark." Lorenzo now feels that he is beaten. Here, at least, is a man whom flattery cannot cajole, nor bribes divert from his path.

Savonarola pursued his path, careless of the frowns of those in power, or the censure of the servile flatterers who had gathered round them. He had it in hand to raise this Florentine people from their degradation, and he would do it, come what might. He had no personal enmity to Lorenzo ; on the contrary, he recognised the intellectual gifts of the man, but was not disposed on that account to shut his eyes to the moral evils arising out of the luxurious slavery into which it had led the Florentines. Savonarola had his mind open to the fact, that the political servility which had forgotten the ancient freedom of the republic, was but the expression of a moral degeneration on the part of the people ; he felt that they had forgotten their rights as citizens, because they had become bad men. He saw no hope for them until the servile spirit which led them to bow to the Medician rule could be changed for the spirit of freedom. His political views were thus the effluence of his religious spirit. And so in burning words, day after day, he preached to the people of their duties as men and their rights as citizens. He not only preached but practised ; and the pure life of the man lent force to the words of the preacher. Such a man never speaks in vain ; all that was left of worth and high-mindedness in the State of Florence gathered round him. Even Lorenzo himself was constrained to say, " Besides this man I have never seen a true monk." Thousands hung upon his words ; people came from far and near to listen ; so general was the desire to hear that the shops in Florence were shut until after the morning preaching, and night after night the Church of San Marco was besieged by persons desirous to gain admission, and who were willing to wait all night in the street that they might be sure of an entrance in the morning ; hundreds were turned away day by day, who could find no admission, for no sooner was the Church opened than it filled. No wonder that Lorenzo and the Medician party began to fear that Savonarola's success boded no good to them.

Flatteries and bribes having failed him, what shall the Medician despot do ? He had long been hoping to rivet his chain on the Florentine people, and shall he be thwarted by this mere monk ? But what shall he do ? Well, he will appeal to Savonarola's patriotism. And so five " prudent and noble " citizens are commissioned by him to expostulate with Savonarola, and persuade him to preach in a different manner, " for the sake of the public weal and peace." " You say you have come to me for the public welfare," was Savonarola's reply, " I tell you it is not so : *LORENZO DE MEDICI has sent you unto me.* Tell him, in my name, he is a Florentine, and the first in the State, I, a foreigner and a poor brother, yet will it happen that he must go hence, and I remain here." He spake as a prophet, and yet with certainty ; for he spake in that faith which fills the souls of all true men, that righteousness and truth must in the end prevail. He knew that he must be victor ; as yet, however, he saw not that he would be victim too. It is ever so with such as he. Such men look only at the great end in view. With eye and heart fixed on that, they press on, oblivious of what lies between.

JAS. L. GOODING.

THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

IN studying the history of Creation, as written out in everlasting characters on the stone walls of the earth, the attention of the geologist is unavoidably drawn to the fact that there has been a constant progression, not merely onward, but upward also; that is to say, the progression of creation was not merely a continued existence but also a constant development. Thus, in the flora, and the animal forms, found in the earliest period at which life became possible, we perceive a mechanism of the very simplest kind, and as we come nearer and nearer to the time at which man came to people the earth with the highest form of being yet created, there is ever found a gradual increase of complexity. We have, on more than one occasion, adverted to the fact of the parallelism existing between the physical and the moral and mental world, have called the attention of our readers to the consideration that the same grand and yet simple law of progress holds good in all, and that the mode of progression in the moral and intellectual world has been like that in the physical creation, onward and upward. In looking at the evolution of the sciences, we have a proof of this. The earliest developed were the simplest, and, as we come nearer to the present time, we find a constant increase of complexity. Look back through the centuries, to what seems to be the very dawn of history, and it is still found that a science of mathematics was existent. Ask for the discoverer of this science, seek the era of its discovery, and you fail in obtaining any information on these points, because the knowledge of both is lost in the far-off antiquity. But ask for the age of the discovery, and the names of the discoverers, of any of the physical sciences, chemistry or physiology, for instance, and the answer is at hand. The reason is that the one is a simple the others complex sciences; the one deals with the simple element of numbers, the others with many elements besides number—as, for instance, force, space, extension, and many more. And as we progress upwards, in the scientific hierarchy, the complexity becomes even greater; so complex, in fact, that many fields of inquiry have not yet been subjected to scientific systematising.

As man stands at the head of creation, is, in fact, a microcosm, gathering up into himself all the lower elements, so it may be easily imagined that the sciences which relate peculiarly to him, would be found the most complex of all, and consequently the least developed. Such is the fact; and while the abstract and physical sciences have been brought to a state of completion, politics, ethics, social statics, and those which deal with humanity as their subject matter, can scarcely be said to have become systematised into sciences at all. To do this will be the work of a future time. Now, what is involved in this? Look back a few centuries, to the time when the physical sciences were in the same predicament, and what do we find? That all sorts of absurd theories and foolish superstitions possessed the minds of men with regard to the physical Universe; absurd theories and foolish superstitions which are yet far from being eradicated from ignorant minds, and which it has ever been the work of the Priest to keep alive, and the destruction whereof he has ever opposed most strenuously and virulently.

It is not until the various discovered facts in any sphere of thought or inquiry have been fully systematised into a science, and that science has laid hold on the popular mind, and gained the popular credence, that the theories and superstitions which, in former times, have usurped the place of the truth, can be driven away and destroyed. So it is we find that in politics, ethics, social

statics, and all those spheres of inquiry which relate to the condition, rights, duties, and progress of mankind, absurd theories still hold their ground, and the beliefs even of the educated portion of the public may properly be termed superstitions; and in this fact we see the reason why the priest and the theologian still remain powerful to teach and enforce false ideas of man's duty and human rights. For where so much is mere theorising, the theorising of the pulpit easily passes muster, and is accepted as correct by a large number of men. Not until there shall exist amongst us a real man-science; that is, not until the facts regarding human progress, and the social conditions under which the same is most easily achieved, shall have been systematised—not until then, will the theorist become powerless, or superstition be rooted out from these spheres of thought.

An illustration of these principles is found in the false and ridiculous theories which have obtained among us, and which are still mooted and believed by so many, regarding the formation of human character. Later generations will look upon the various systems of educational training in vogue amongst us, and wonder that ever men could have been so foolish as to believe in them. They will look back and see how the time, which should be spent in developing and directing the moral and emotional in our children, those precious years in which they are open to receive and retain good impressions, are wasted in drilling them into repeating by rote grammatical rules, or in giving them what is termed a classical education; they will see how the means of creating upright, self-reliant, self-helping, men and women are entirely neglected, and the young man or young woman sent out to fight the great battle of life without any of that moral armour which is alone their preservative from sin and ruin. And the wonder, on the part of wiser generations, in looking back upon this present time, will be, not that so much of vice and misery, wretchedness and sin, exist among us, but, that so much of greatness and goodness should be achieved by our people, in spite of the evil systems of training to which they are subjected.

Looking, in fact, at the modes of education prevalent amongst us, we may say that this is a field in which superstition is still rife among all classes, for what is superstition but a belief in the value or truth of a thing which has no foundation in reason or fact? And then, when we turn from the school education of our time to the religious training provided for us in our youth, we see still further evidence of the same truth. While, in the one, we observe an absence of all moral culture, in the other, we are met by the terrible fact that the training given is immoral, that truth is not alone neglected, but falsehood taught; false views of man and duty, of God's character and man's relation to the Deity, are instilled into us in our earliest years; and yet hundreds and thousands believe that this is good, superstition, standing in the way, preventing them from recognizing its true character, or knowing that the training received in early life, must necessarily produce evil results, and those only.

But, with reference to this matter, we find, not only that superstition is still rife, but, theories, more or less absurd, more or less one-sided, are extremely common in our day. There is one party of theorists who believe that man is absolutely the creature of circumstances, and that his character may be formed for him, that is, altered and modified, according to the circumstances in which he is placed. The teaching is that by a system a moral change could be wrought; remove the causes of vice and crime, that is, the external conditions which seem to produce them, and you would then

succeed in entirely destroying them. There is sufficient truth about this teaching to deceive many into believing it to be the whole truth. It is, however, deficient in one very important respect ; it wants practicality. We must take men and institutions as they are, and not as we would have them to be ; our reforms must not seek to overturn all existing institutions, or even offend every existing prejudice, but must be gradual and grow out of the wants of the time, otherwise they will fail of any effect.

But, besides this, there is another evil in this teaching ; it allows too little for man's individuality, and its success must have destroyed, in destroying this, one of the best guarantees of progress. It is essentially a stationary system ; it seeks to do for men much that men must be left to do for themselves, and so it destroys self-reliance and self-help. But it is not true that man is wholly the creature of circumstances ; he is possessed of freedom, and will exercise it under any circumstances. It is not true that man's character can be formed for him, he has a will of his own which must be taken into account. That man is not the creature of the influences brought to bear upon him is shewn in this, that so many rise superior to the evil influences of the early training of which we have already spoken, that, in spite of the schoolmaster and the priest, we yet meet with many capable of thinking for themselves, and acting as good and free men in the world.

But do we, then, form our characters for ourselves ? Can it be said that man is wholly the arbiter of his fate ? Opposed to the class of theorists of whom we have been speaking is another class, who teach that he is so. Are they right ? Let us look around us in the world, and we have not to look far before we see that they are wrong. Look at yon ploughman, who believes, and acts as though it were his true destiny to drive a plough, and be obedient to the parson and subservient to the squire, all his life long—is he the arbiter of his fate ? Nay, he dare not hold an opinion of his own, and is content to lie helpless in the position in which it has been his lot to be cast. He, and such as he, if they can be said to have any character at all, have had their character formed for them. And there are hundreds and thousands of such amongst us.

In truth, then, both these theories embrace extreme views, and are one-sided statements of the facts regarding the formation of human character. Large numbers, like the ploughman, are the creatures of circumstances wholly ; and on all of us they exercise greater or less influence. It is not until, and only in proportion as, a man rises into possession of active power of thought and volition, that he becomes capable of moulding circumstances and conquering fate. And inasmuch as it is but the few who ever rise into this sphere, we may say that the circumstances surrounding most men exercise a powerful influence upon their characters and on their fate. And never can even the greatest amongst us entirely free himself from their force. The truth, then, lies between the two theories, and while, on the one hand, we should never be blind to the capacity which man has to conquer adverse circumstances, and work out his own moral and mental elevation, we should, on the other hand, never forget that external influences are to some extent operant upon all ; and amongst these we must note especially those to which in their youthful years men are subjected ; for the influences brought to bear upon us in our early years are those which operate the most powerfully ; early impressions are ever the most difficult to conquer, and perhaps seldom is a complete conquest of them achieved.

Our pulpits have aided in perpetuating false views on this subject. For

instance, how frequently they resound with denunciations of the wicked sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas; and pity is lavished on old Eli for that he had sons so disobedient. In looking out into the world around us, we find many an Eli, with sons like him of old; and our pity is too frequently, as in this case, reserved for the parent, while all our blame falls on the children. This is most unjust, and arises from false ideas with reference to the powers and duties of parents. It is the Elis generally who should be blamed; for children are, in most cases, what their parents make them. The power of the parent is enormous, and with him it lies to make his child capable of leading a righteous manly life, or leaving him unprovided with those powers of fighting against temptation, without which he becomes the victim of those social influences which are sure to be brought to bear upon him when he goes out into life. In how many homes do we find that every whim and every wish of a wilful boy are gratified, and the will of the child is allowed to grow powerful without any corresponding sense of duty being inculcated. If parents were guided by a wise desire to bring up their children with true views of duty, the world would be far better than it is. But the development of the moral man is a thing almost entirely overlooked in our training of the young, and if, when they grow up, and go out into life, they err, let us not visit all the blame on their shoulders, and reserve our misplaced pity for the parent who has misused his powers, and neglected his duties. Let our theologians be just when they speak of this Eli, and of filial disobedience; and, instead of holding up Eli as a man unfortunate in having such wicked sons, point out the truth, applicable to so many fathers in these days, that to the evil training and neglect of the parent, is mostly due the fact that the children are wicked and disobedient.

JAS. L. GOODING.

NEWMAN STREET FREE CHURCH SUNDAY LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

JESUS KEEPING THE LAST PASSOVER.

HISTORICAL criticism has no cause to blush for its answer, when, with its sister sciences, it is called upon to prove its worthiness, or to show the rate of its modern progress; for, aided by the patient study and philological researches of many eminent men, it has advanced toward perfection with as great speed as can be boasted by the proudest of modern sciences, so that at present it bids fair to become the crowning glory of literature. History has cast away all its earliest trammels, it is no longer the mere charnal-house it once was. Could Hume or Robertson be resuscitated and introduced to the works of modern historical critics, German, French, and English, they would find it difficult to divine the methods through which such results have been achieved, and equally astonished by the vastness of the field of truth which has been recovered for our information. The machinery employed is entirely new and simple; or, perhaps, not new in spirit, but newly applied to studies of this character.

The modern critic, acting upon the principle so finely developed in the Baconian philosophy, takes nothing for granted while demonstration is possible; he tests his details before using them as the bases of a general conclusion; thus he secures a degree of certainty which in former ages was never legitimately arrived at. There was, indeed, a certainty in the olden times, but it was groundless; being no better, no truer, than the certainty of those who were not learned in the science of the heavens and the order of nature. They believed all that was written, just as if it

were impossible for authors to fall into error; or if they did not believe all, then such portions were accredited as harmonised with their wishes or foregone conclusions; now men do not pursue that course.

When a Niebuhr critically recomposes the history of Rome, or Grote or Hess that of Greece, results are arrived at which completely revolutionise the established notions of Athenian and Roman history. Both these nations lose much of the romance which formerly invested them; but, fortunately, are thereby brought more completely within the pale of human interest. This, however, is not done without what many esteem to be an equivalent loss, in our being compelled to cease believing many of the beautiful stories associated with their early history. The poetical charm is dissolved, and we are thrown back upon the world of simple fact to conceive their early colonists, as if they were modern men, laying the foundation of a state. And so it is with the records of Europe in the Crusading and Middle Ages. We may accept their history as sung by troubadours or related by the Romancists, and cannot fail to be delighted by the scenes and stories therein set forth; we may accept as verities the accounts that have reached us in legend and song, of the renowned Prince Arthur and the famous Knights of his Round Table, but in doing so, we exclude ourselves from the chance of properly comprehending the history of the periods in which those mythical personages are said to have lived. There are millions who still believe the story of William Tell as it is exhibited in the drama by Sheridan Knowles—who are as completely convinced of his having shot the apple on the head of his son, as they are of their own existence; but no amount of confidence upon their parts will justify the modern historian in giving place to the story in any history of Switzerland. The same tale was told by Saxo-Grammaticus at least 100 years before the supposed birth of William Tell. And what shall we say of our own Merlin, of King Alfred and the cake burning, of Robin Hood, and other equally well-known characters? The historical critic does but breathe upon them and they vanish from the world of facts into that of fictions—where, however, they lose but little of their value. For even if there had been no such person as William Tell, in the heart of man such an one had been conceived, and was therefore possible. Although Othello be but a creation of the imagination, he is known by us, and teaches us in his career quite as much and as clearly as any of the real historical personages. And probably it will not be contested that even those who are the best known depend more upon the aid of an imaginative pen for their memory being handed down to future ages, than they do upon the more accurate narratives of our colder historians. He, however, who touches as a critic the records of the past, does not deny the beauty of the stories, he denies only their objective truth; and when—as many have done—men call him soulless because of this rejection, they do but imitate the most ignorant members of the community, who imagine that because a surgeon performs painful operations he must be a man without heart and sympathy.

The majority of readers in arriving at their conclusions, are too powerfully influenced by what is called the beauty of the narrative, forgetting that all highly-wrought narratives betray the hand of the artist. The remark made when a touching story is read, is that it ought to be true, and when it has once obtained circulation as a truth, it is almost impossible to convince men of the contrary. We have an instance of this in the celebrated story of the relief of Lucknow. At the time when the news reached us that the famous Havelock had cut his way through all opposition and entered that city, there came a letter describing a touching incident of the relief. It was written when on every side death stared them in the face; and it seemed that no human skill could avert it any longer. They saw the moment approach for bidding farewell to earth, yet without feeling that unutterable horror which must have been experienced by the unhappy victims in other cities. They were resolved rather to die than to yield, and were fully persuaded that in twenty-four hours all would be over. The engineers had said so, and all knew the worst. The women strove to encourage each other in performing the light duties assigned to them, such as conveying orders to the batteries and supplying the men with provisions. The writer (a woman) said: "I had gone out to try

"and make myself useful, in company with Jessie Brown, the wife of a corporal in my husband's regiment. Poor Jessie had been in a state of restless excitement all through the siege, and had fallen away visibly within the last few days. A constant fever consumed her, and her mind wandered occasionally, especially that day, when the recollections of home seemed powerfully present to her. At last, overcome with fatigue, she lay down on the ground, wrapped up in her plaid. I sat beside her, promising to awaken her, when, as she said, 'her father should return from the ploughing.' She at length fell into a profound slumber, motionless, and, apparently, breathless, her head resting in my lap. I myself could no longer resist the inclination to sleep, in spite of the continual roar of the cannon.

"Suddenly I was aroused by a wild unearthly scream close to my ear; my companion stood upright before me, her arms raised, and her head bent forward in the attitude of listening. A look of intense delight broke over her countenance, she grasped my hand, drew me towards her, and exclaimed, 'Dinna ye hear it? dinna ye hear it? Ay, I'm no dreamin', it's 'the slogan of the Highlanders! We're saved, we're saved!' Then, flinging herself on her knees, she thanked God with passionate fervour. I felt utterly bewildered; my English ears heard only the roar of artillery, and I thought my poor Jessie was still raving; but she darted to the batteries, and I heard her cry incessantly to the men, 'Courage! courage! hark to the slogan—to the Macgregor, the grandest of them a'. Here's help at last!'

"To describe the effect of these words upon the soldiers would be impossible. For a moment they ceased firing, and every soul listened in intense anxiety. Gradually, however, there arose a murmur of bitter disappointment, and the wailing of the women, who had flocked to the spot, burst out anew as the Colonel shook his head. Our dull lowland ears heard nothing but the rattle of the musketry. A few moments more of this death-like suspense, of this agonising hope, and Jessie, who had again sunk on the ground, sprang to her feet, and cried in a voice so clear, and piercing, that it was heard along the whole line—'Will ye no believe it noo? The slogan has ceased, indeed, but the Campbell's are comin'? D'ye hear? d'ye hear?'

"At that moment we seemed, indeed, to hear the voice of God in the distance, when the pibroch of the Highlanders brought us tidings of deliverance, for now there was no longer any doubt of the fact. The shrill, penetrating, ceaseless sound, which arose above all other sounds, could come neither from the advance of the enemy, nor from the work of the Sappers. No, it was indeed the blast of the Scottish bagpipes, now shrill and harsh, as threatening vengeance on the foe, then in softer tones, seeming to promise succour to their friends in need. Never surely was there such a scene as that which followed. Not a heart in the Residency of Lucknow but bowed itself before God. All, by simultaneous impulse, fell upon their knees, and nothing was heard but bursting sobs and the murmured voice of prayer. Then all arose, and there rang out of a thousand lips a great shout of joy, which resounded far and wide, and lent new vigour to that blessed pibroch. To our cheer of 'God save the Queen,' they replied by the well-known strain that nerves every Scot to tears, 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot,' etc.

"After that, nothing else made an impression on me. I scarcely remember what followed. Jessie was presented to the General on his entrance into the fort, and at the officers' banquet her health was drunk by all present, while the pipers marched round the table playing once more the familiar air of 'Auld lang syne.'"

You cannot have forgotten the enthusiasm with which this touching episode of the relief was repeated by all who had read it in the daily papers. Songs upon Jessie were composed, and sung to applauding audiences, and, for a time, there seemed to be but one desire in England—to see and shake the hand of the heroine. Yet with all its beauty and pathos, the story must be abandoned as groundless, notwithstanding its minuteness of detail and air of simplicity. No such event occurred in Lucknow, and the first that was heard of it by the gallant men who

defended the city, was when it was read by them from the English papers. An acquaintance of mine, who was there at the time, said to me not long ago, "I would 'it were true, for the story is too good to be abandoned," and he but shares the common conviction; for the majority of readers cannot avoid wishing it could be proven to be true. Many are convinced that it is so, and in after ages there is no doubt it will be accepted with unquestioning faith. Jessie will find thousands to advocate her claims, for they who repudiate them will be treated as semi-barbarians, and spoken of as men who have neither the sense of beauty, nor the love of truth to guide them in their decisions.

At present the same is said of those who question the correctness of the popular theory relating to what is called "The Lord's Supper." It is so generally believed that Jesus instituted the Supper, that few can find patience enough to listen to any objections; but although we allow that they who will not tolerate a free inquiry are honest, it is equally certain that the popular theory has no sufficient foundation. Taken as a whole, the narrative of how Jesus spent his last evening with the twelve before his arrest—especially as it is written in the fourth Gospel—is touchingly beautiful, and the amount of detail wrought into it, gives such a character of truthfulness to the whole, that we are desirous of believing it. And independently of that, it is impossible to conceive the pious trust of Christendom through so many ages, or to realise in thought, the joy of heart that "taking the 'communion' has created for millions, without feeling desirous of believing the popular theory. Grey-headed old men and women, whose lives were once a perpetual round of care, toil, and want, unrelieved by those hours of gladness and prosperity which fell to the lot of their more fortunate brethren, have gone up to the table to "communicate," and found in that a consolation and source of strength which seemed to compensate them for all their pains and difficulties, their simple hearts were gladdened by the thought that he who had loved men so much had set them an example of patience and loving kindness. I say not that men should rest content in suffering because others have suffered; neither do I argue that submission is a solemn duty, where the wrongs endured can be redressed; but, looking to the mental condition of those who suffered, and feeling how incapable they were of working out higher principles, it is impossible to escape from a lingering fondness for that which brought them relief. Still we are bound to cleave to the truth, and if the popular theory be untrue, we may not play with our consciences so far as to persuade ourselves of the contrary. If Jesus did not establish the Supper, then it is better candidly to admit the fact, and look elsewhere for the means of elevation. There are no considerations which should ever be allowed to hamper men in seeking to discover, or, when discovered, in accepting the Truth. What is based upon falsity, misconception, or ignorance, can never be truly sacred. To attempt to make it appear so, or, without remonstrance, to allow men to accept it as such, is to palter with our conscience, and to be forgetful of our duty.

(To be continued.)

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XXI.

(Concluded from p. 241.)

CAPTAIN OSCOTT here interposed with the observation—which he was but parroting—that it is not for magistrates to violate the known laws of the land, and that, if those who do wrong are allowed to escape unpunished, there will be an end of justice, and the peace of society.

Bezley, who had felt very uncomfortable while the Rector was speaking, took the cue from Oscott, and added that, if they were to consider, in every case, the intellectual condition of accused men, there would be no end to their inquiries.

“I advise Mr. Lester,” he continued, “seeing that the Bench allows him to speak, to confine himself to the actual facts of the case. Let him prove that the prisoner did not take the hare, or that, having it in his possession, he had lawfully obtained it. We shall then know what to do, but all these remarks about the laws of God, good in themselves, are entirely out of place. We are Christian men, and every gentleman upon the Bench believes the Word of God, but let us have things in their right places. Sermons in the pulpit, and legal arguments in our Courts.”

Before Lester could go on with his appeal, another worthy magistrate—the Solon of Crosswood—interposed his opinion that,

“The Reverend gentleman, who has somewhat irregularly been permitted to address the Bench, is evidently labouring under the false impression that punishment is an evil, and that it is a good and virtuous thing to obtain the release of a guilty man. All that he has said has been based upon that theory of justice. Now I protest against the doctrine, as being at variance with all sound moral principles. The fact is, that, throughout the universe, so far as we know it, punishment accompanies, or follows immediately after, the violation of law. I am not a divine, but I know that God does not allow the

guilty to escape, and, consequently, it is impossible for me to consent to sit here, by my silence approving the doctrines laid down by the mistaken, but well-intentioned Rector of the parish. God punishes the breaker of laws, and we are but imitating Him when we punish the wrong-doer. It is a solemn duty we owe to both our country and God to do this; and, therefore, I hope, if the gentleman has any other observations to offer, he will not found them upon such irrational and pernicious theories."

Lester felt indignant at being thus lectured, yet it was with perfect composure that he resumed his address.

"It has been rightly urged," he said, "that the violation of law involves punishment, but, in admitting this, we must carefully avoid confounding the human with the Divine. If a man goes begging when he is hungry, God does not punish him through the stings of conscience; but if a man commits murder, I feel assured that the terrors of a guilty conscience will not fail to avenge the murdered one. It will follow from this, that if we make a law against begging, and punish men by imprisonment for asking bread when they are hungry, we must not expect their consciences to punish also. It is wrong in the nature of things for a man to take the life of his neighbour, but not so with the bird that builds in our eaves. Every one feels at liberty to kill a rat or a sparrow—why not a hare or a pheasant? The mere human arrangements made about these things do not change their intrinsic nature, and, consequently, the conscience will never plead in favour of our artificial game-laws. Then, as regards the sin of permitting the guilty to go free, I do not acknowledge that this man is guilty of any sin; he has broken one of the artificial, but not one of the Divine laws, and I am morally justified in asking that he shall be pardoned; but even were it otherwise, even had he actually sinned, I should still ask the same. When, as a clergyman, I repeat the words, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,' they have, to my mind, this meaning, that I should not ask God to forgive me, if I cannot forgive the wrongs I have endured at the hands of my fellow-men. Moreover, it is the foundation of our Christian faith, that God does forgive sin without inflicting any punishment. And when I ask the Bench to deal leniently with the prisoner, I do it with the assurance that every gentleman present knows he has not committed a crime. You are naturally desirous to prevent your pastime being interfered with, and, to gain your ends, may send the accused to prison; but if this be your resolve, then I declare you to be violators of the Divine laws, inasmuch as you will be guilty of selfishly poisoning the very springs of justice, and of adding agony to the sufferings of a poor, friendless man. Gentlemen, I have done."

The Bench rose, and retired for some minutes, but on their return it was evident that Walters was doomed.

Ralph Pinder now prepared himself for the performance of his task in passing sentence. "Prisoner," said he, "we have listened with unusual consideration to the observations addressed to us on your behalf by the Rector of this parish. We all entertain the highest respect for his known character as a philanthropist, which has gained him the esteem of many of our townsmen; and feeling that his appeal to us as Christians could not be overlooked, the court, with few interruptions, permitted him to pursue a course of advocacy which would not have been tolerated in any other person. Had a legal gentleman argued as he has done, the Court must have stopped him; and now that he has been heard, we cannot but feel that if his views were reduced

to practice there would be an end of all law and government ; society would be ruined if magistrates were to act as he, [through mistaken kindness, advises. If all offenders were pardoned, offences would soon be trebled. Probably a time will arrive—it is so set forth in the Sacred Scriptures, and must therefore be true—a time will come, when there will be neither robbery nor murder, and then it will be easy to act upon the principles which have been so earnestly laid down by Mr. Lester. But we must deal with men and things as they are ; just now, such a course would be as pernicious as it would be illegal and un-Christian. And in naming the latter I think it is but right to say that this Court always proceeds upon Christian principles—we cannot recognise any others. Our laws are Christian laws, the fact of their having been made by Christian men is sufficient to satisfy us with regard to their nature ; we, therefore, have nothing further to do than justly to administer them. Now it is clearly against the laws for any unlicensed person to take possession of any kind of game ; and you, prisoner, cannot plead that you were ignorant of the law, for, by endeavouring to hide the hare under your smock frock, you gave evidence of your knowledge.”

A subdued murmur ran through the Court, proving that the listeners appreciated the acuteness of the observation.

Poinder was greatly pleased with this recognition of his skill. “Had you,” he continued, “carried it openly along the road the Court would have judged your conduct differently, but, taking the case as it stands, we shall not be doing justice unless we inflict the full penalty in the shape of a fine, which, with the addition of expenses, must be paid before leaving the Court, or you will be committed to prison for the space of three calendar months.”

During the delivery of this address the prisoner became deadly pale, and clutched convulsively at the rail in front of the little box in which he stood. His condition was all the more painful to the observer because of his inability to utter his grief. When his fate was announced he almost shrieked out ;—

“Oh, good gentleman, have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me ! For the love o’ God don’t send me to prison ! it will break my heart if I go to prison ! I never in all my life stole anything from my masters or neighbours. You’ll kill me if you send me to prison.” Falling upon his knees he cried, “Pray don’t send me to prison. I know it will be the death of me if you do.”

There was something in the voice and manner of the pleading man which painfully impressed every listener, and even Ralph Poinder half wished the words he had uttered could be recalled. Glancing around the Bench he seemed to be inviting a recommendation to mercy, but no one spoke. Pausing an instant, as if to collect courage to place the man beyond the hope of release, he named the amount both of the fine and the expenses ; the latter having been whispered into his ear by the clerk.

Had the whole moveable property of Walters—merely cottage furniture—been sold by public auction it would not have yielded the sum named. This fact was pretty well known to the Bench, for it was true of all men in his condition. But had it been proposed to raise the sum by means of a subscription there would have been no difficulty in immediately collecting it ; for, secretly, nearly every magistrate then upon the bench would have given his share. They had no passionate desire to send this man to prison ; but, being desirous of making an example, they seized the opportunity, and agreed to his incarceration. They were all alarmed, however, by the increasing pallor of the prisoner, who, when the Chairman had done speaking, reeled ominously, and then fell forward, foaming a little at the mouth like one in a fit. In an

instant every gentleman on the Bench was upon his feet, while many willing hands seized the prisoner to loosen his neckerchief and bathe his forehead.

One of the magistrates, a retired London physician, who had made a very large fortune in his profession, pressed forward to ascertain the real state of affairs, nor was he long in drawing forth the little case containing lancets which had never been used. Steady was the hand of the veteran when, for the first time for twenty years, he opened a vein, from which, however, no blood came. Ten minutes had not elapsed before all was over, the prisoner had been set at liberty by a superior judge, and then it was every one in Court felt that had mercy been shown by those who sat upon the Bench this sad ending would not have occurred. Yet for a time none spake their thoughts, for all were terror-stricken by the sadness of the visitation. The physician merely announced that life was hopelessly extinct, adding, "There can be no doubt that Mr. Lester is correct in saying this poor fellow has, for some time past, been living upon food both bad in quality, and insufficient in quantity. Probably, for some months past, he has not had one good meal of fresh meat, such as a man should have. He was shaken by want far more than by actual disease, as thousands of his class generally are. His emaciated frame betrays that painful fact. And now that this sad excitement has happened, the strain put upon his nervous system being more than he could bear, some vessel in the brain has given way, and his death must be ascribed to an apoplectic attack. Poor fellow! poor fellow!" he added, "he has been hardly entreated."

These words were uttered not in the cold manner of one who merely announces a scientific truth, but quietly and with great feeling. Silence reigned again, for none of the magistrates cared to utter a word.

Lester, standing beside the corpse, broke it, saying, "Here, in presence of our dead brother, let us endeavour to school ourselves into punishing less and forgiving more. God will judge him more generously than he was judged by his brethren upon earth. In the hour of hunger he took a hare and was not forgiven; may they who denied him pardon, and who now know the intensity of his agony, learn the great lesson that they who pardon the transgressions of those who are poor, hungry, and ignorant, are but dealing justly with men, and paying due homage unto God. In a few days, although perhaps not so suddenly, we also must journey the way that he has gone; and if we do but closely scan the lineaments of his dead face, we shall learn the nothingness of those miserable vanities upon which we so readily set our hearts. We live as though life were a dream and death a delusion. But they are both stern realities which should neither be foolishly idled away nor insanely mocked. Let us have done with childish play and become as earnest men, who will use the world wisely and deal out justice to all God's suffering children. In savage lands that man's death could not have been thus caused. It is only here, in the centre of Christianity, that men die through hunger and systematically unjust treatment, while there is plenty in the land and knowledge to do well. We may take shame to ourselves that it is so, but certainly there is no hope of things becoming better, beyond this, that we shall each do better than we have hitherto done."

Here a wild unearthly wail rang through the Court, piercing every heart and that the more sharply because all knew from whom it proceeded, and how utterly impossible it was to say or do anything which would serve to relieve the widowed woman's distress.

The officers of the Court vainly endeavoured to hold her back, for her appeals rendered them powerless. Three men stood firmly against the door

and presented a barrier she could not force out of the way, but they stood not long to offer resistance to her entrance.

"If you are men," she said in a low, sad tone, "you will let me kiss his cheek once more while it is warm."

Their arms dropped instantly, and in another minute the head of the corpse was pressed to her heart. But no tear came, nor did she utter a word, for her sorrows were unutterable. With her head bent down until the living and the dead cheeks met together, she sat for at least five minutes, and, as if fascinated, there was not one who rose to leave the Court. Then, bounding up, she glared upon the Bench with all the fury of some wild animal, and cried—

"You have murdered my good husband because he tried to bring home meat for his hungry children. May God's curse, and the curse of the fatherless and the widow, rest upon all your hares. He never poached, never touched anything that wasn't his own, but I'll teach his boys to have revenge, I'll teach 'em to kill every hare in the country, and while my curse is upon you all you cannot injure them and will not prosper."

"Order! order!" cried the constable-keeper of the Court, but in a subdued voice.

"Order," cried the woman. "And now that you have killed him would you stop me from talking about it. Order! order! why didn't you cry out 'order' when they were telling my poor husband that he should go to prison? The murderers! But I have cursed them, and the God above will not let the widow's curse fail. They are full to-day, but maybe to-morrow they'll be as empty as he and the children have been for weeks together."

At this moment her wild eye lighted upon Captain Oscott, and she fancied—but wrongly so—that he was laughing at her. She flew at him with a savageness of demeanour never surpassed, and, had it not been for the assistance rendered by various persons in the Court, his fine person would have been seriously damaged.

"Come," said the trembling Chairman, "the woman is mad, heed her not, but send her away."

"Better send her to prison for three months in place of her husband," whispered a voice, so loudly as to be heard all through the court.

The Chairman looked vainly round to discover the bold speaker, but, failing to identify him, the bench arose, and within ten minutes the court was cleared of all save the corpse and the widow.

On his way home, Lester was accosted by Sam Stokes, who, cap in hand, congratulated him upon his efforts.

"I told the poor soul to call and see you, Sir, because I thought, meetin' her in her misery, you would try to get justice done to her husband."

"I am obliged to you, Sam, for your good opinion, but, in presence of what has just occurred, I must express the wish that you would attend more to what you hear in church on Sundays."

"Well, Sir," replied the sturdy shoemaker, "I think I do attend to it. I tries to do so. It was through attending to what I heard there that I thought of sending Mrs. Walters to you. It was only the other Sunday you were tellin' us 'to do by other people, as we wants 'em to do by us'—I liked that sermon very much. So, says I, when I heard of this poor labourin' fellow being in trouble, now's the time to give our Rector a chance; for, you see, Sir, I know'd if you had been in his fix you'd ha' wanted somebody to do a good turn for you. But it ain't I as needs to be told to attend to what you

say in church—it's the big people as needs that. They sits and looks as if the sermon warn't meant for them, but only for their servants and labourers; and, in the Court to-day, they didn't agree to make it light for Walters, nor you couldn't shame 'em into it."

"You were there, were you?" asked Lester.

"Yes, Sir, I was, and I knows that you'll have plenty o' cause to remember your being there. They'll never forgive you for interfering in game cases. The Chairman said a good many fine things about 'respectin' you' for your being good, but I saw the devil in his eye all the while, and he ain't Ralph Poinder if he don't do you some injury."

"Was it you, Sam, that whispered about sending the widow to prison?"

"Yes, Sir, it was, and they had just as well done it as sent her husband. They know'd he wasn't a poacher, but then they wanted to get hold of somebody for a sort o' scarecrow, so they sentenced him. But I was glad to see their fright. They'd give anythin' to undo this day's work."

"But, Sam, they had no thought of killing the man."

"No, that they hadn't," replied Stokes, "for then they wouldn't have done it. But, if he had lived and gone to gaol, what he would have had to suffer! And what about his family he while was there? What do they care for the hunger and sufferin'? It's a good deal better for the poor fellow that he's gone out of all trouble, for if he had lived he would either have become a drunkard, or thro' shame he would not have held up his head agin."

"It is a sad day's work, Stokes, yet we must not judge them too severely; they were more mistaken than wicked."

"Perhaps so, Sir, perhaps so; but its odd that all their mistakes should be so terribly one-sided. For my part I don't believe it. I say that they don't care a rush for the people, more than for what they gets out of 'em. And, all the while that they are talkin' about their respect for you, they don't mean a word of it. The fact is, they use you as a sort of policeman, to keep the people in order. Pardon me, Sir, for speakin' so very plain, but it's the truth, and nothin' else."

Lester felt that no argument was needed to prove this, for he had already arrived at the same conclusion. Desiring, however, to avoid making Stokes his confessor, he asked him when the next meeting of the Inquirers would be held.

The desired information was furnished, but Sam added, "If, Sir, you will allow an ignorant man, like me, to give advice, I should say, don't you come to that meetin'."

"Why not? I promised to attend, and, moreover, I should like to answer several of the objections I heard raised when I was with you."

"Perhaps so, Sir. Not that I think you can make much of a hand at that. But now that this game case has happened, all the magistrates will want very badly to believe somethin' wrong to say agin you. And they'll tell people that you came to our meetin' to teach our doctrines. They darn't say much about the hare business, but of the other affair they can talk loudly enough. And the fact is, that all the big people will say you are not the right sort of a man to be in the Church. So, I think, Sir, it would be better for all parties if you don't come."

"I'm obliged to you for your advice, but it is my duty to attend, and if people are wicked enough to misrepresent my actions, the responsibility will rest upon their shoulders. Yet why should you care about what they say?"

You are not a believer, and I am astonished that you do not advise me to do what will injure the cause to which you are opposed."

"Why, you see, Sir, it's so very uncommon for us to find anybody who will try to understand workin' folks, that we don't like to lose 'em when they turn up. I know you can do a deal of good for poor people in Cross-wood if you keeps clear of our society. I know you won't speak wrong about us; but if you take our part, then none of the people will listen to anythin' you say. They never inquired, and won't listen to 'em as does. And the best way for a man to lose his character is to join our society, for it doesn't matter what wicked things are said about him, if he is one of us everybody believes it. If somebody was to say that I get drunk and beat my wife, half the people in this place 'ud say it was just like me, and, o' course, it was all along o' what they call my infidelity. But if the same thing was said o' some o' the church or chapel people, it wouldn't be believed."

"That is easily accounted for by this, that we expect unbelievers to be bad men, believers to be good ones."

"Yes, Sir, you expect it, I dare say, but it don't turn out that way. I don't find that it's mostly atheists that gets into debt and cheats their neighbours; the fact is, that all the bad fellows profess to be Christians, just so as the better to get on a-cheatin' their neighbours; so that our party keeps pretty clear o' the rogues. And most o' 'em as gets into prison calls 'emselves believers. But, depend upon it, Sir, now that you have gone about to do the workin' people good, and have flung some hard words at the heads of the rulers hereabouts, it would ruin all your plans if it was to be known that you attended our meetin', unless, perhaps, if it was thought that you came to put us down, which, o' course, can't be done."

"Why are you so positive about what cannot be done? How do you know that I am not prepared openly to refute every objection which was urged the other evening?"

"No offence, Sir, but I am sure you can't do it. I have read enough to know that the objections ain't to be got rid of. If they were, why, then, Christian people wouldn't get so angry about it. The truth is, that they knows the thing isn't to be done; that's why they gets to be so peppery about it. But, Sir, I do hope as you'll take my advice, not to come to our meetin'. I know as it'll be the best in the end for all parties."

"Well, Sam, I shall consider the subject before deciding. Of course, for the sake of those who are there, I ought to attend; while, for the sake of others who never attend such meetings, I should remain away. And yet, perhaps, so far as the practical Christian virtues are concerned, they who attend are little, if any, inferior to those who remain away. I believe in many senses you are a better Christian than they are who denounce you."

By this time they had reached the rectory gate, and Sam went his way, leaving the Rector to tell the story of the day to Ella and Barrington, who was there to dinner.

That night he was closely occupied in endeavouring to solve the problem how it happened that the unbeliever, Sam Stokes, acted with far more Christian charity in judging of his doings and speeches than was exhibited by the chief members of his own church. It was not without help that he achieved his wish, but in what way that help came, must be left at present, so that more pressing matters may be attended to.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XLII.

SAVONAROLA AND THE FLORENTINE REVOLUTION.

It is significant of the state of public feeling in Italy in the latter part of the fifteenth century, and forms a key to many of the after-events, that such a man as Savonarola should receive, as he did, invitations from many of the towns to visit them and preach there. We have seen, in the course of these papers, how widespread the spirit of reform had become in various parts of Europe. In the success of Savonarola, and the readiness and desire to hear him evinced on the part of the Italian people, we have proof that the same spirit was abroad in Italy. If the Reformation of the sixteenth century extended not to that unhappy land, it was not the fault of the people, it was the fault of their rulers and the people's misfortune. Thus the strange anomaly stands recorded on the historic page, that the country which did more for the revival of learning and literature in Europe than any other, the land from whence came that spirit of intellectual freedom of which the Reformation was the expression, remained in priestly bondage, and subject to all the evils of priestly supremacy. And this was so, not because the people would have it so; but because the Church was there supported by the State, because a cruel tyranny composed of the alliance of statecraft and priestcraft bound the people in fetters which they could not burst. Let us not, therefore, wonder that Italian Reformers, and Savonarola in common with the rest, have been political as well as religious Reformers. We may reasonably hope, however, that now an era of well-deserved freedom and political and religious regeneration is dawning upon this land devoted so long to the powers of evil.

One, and one only, of the invitations to leave Florence for a time was accepted by Savonarola, and that was to Bologna, where he had passed his novitiate and the early years of his monk-life. It was this recollection, probably, which induced him on this occasion to break through his established rule of refusing these invitations. One incident in connection with his course of sermons there is worthy of mention, as showing that he carried the same bold free spirit with him wherever he went. Among those who came to hear him was the princess Bentivoglio, whose husband conducted the affairs of the city, holding there a somewhat similar position to that of Lorenzo in Florence. She, however, with all her attendants, made a practice of not arriving until the commencement of the sermon, to the great disturbance of the congregation and annoyance of the preacher. Savonarola finding this continue, made a public request that all persons would be present in due time. With that vulgar pride, found frequently among the so-called noble, the princess paid no heed whatever to the admonition, and after Savonarola had waited some time to give her an opportunity of altering her practice, he determined to administer a reproof, and, accordingly, when she next arrived, stopped his discourse and exclaimed, "Behold, here comes the Evil Spirit to disturb the Word of God!" She never came again. Such was the man; there was nothing of the sycophant in him: no truckling to money or rank on his part.

Back again at San Marco, and at his old work, it is not long before Savonarola hears that Lorenzo lies smitten with his death-sickness, at his princely villa at Careggi. Every appliance that the medical quackery (not worthy of the name of science) of that time knows has been tried in vain. In vain has Lazzaro da Ficino, the Abernethy of his age, come all the way from Pavia, and prescribed his "costly and marvellous medicament," composed of "dis-

"tiled gems." Lorenzo, like meaner mortals, must die. Death came with all his terrors to the dying tyrant. Religion offered no consolation to him, a scoffer and sceptic; a thing hardly to be wondered at considering the character of its ministers. In his extremity, however, he remembered that there was at least one true man in Florence, one who had never yielded to his threats or his flatteries—him he would fain see, and confess his sins. Savonarola at least, he knows, will tell him the truth, he doubts all others. The especial sins he desired to confess were, the cruel proscription which followed the Pazzi conspiracy; the sacking of Polterra, and the forcible appropriation of the moneys belonging to the charitable fund for poor girls, by reason of which many of them had fallen into evil courses. A message was despatched to San Marco for Savonarola. "I deem it useless to go," said he, "for I have no words to speak which can be pleasing to Lorenzo." But on being informed that he wished to confess to him, he went. As the dying tyrant called up in confession all his evil past, his agitation was fearful, and, to quiet him, Savonarola went on repeating, "God is good, God is merciful!" "But," added he, as soon as Lorenzo had finished speaking, "there are three things needful "to that end." "Which be they, Father?" asked Lorenzo. Savonarola's countenance, always stern, grew dark and awful, as he replied—"In the first "place you must have a strong and living faith in God's mercy." "I have the "strongest." "In the second place you must restore all your ill-gotten gains, "or depute your sons to restore them in your stead." At these words Lorenzo started, but by a strong effort over himself he nodded his assent. Then Savonarola rose to his feet, and lifting up his hands, he sternly regarded the dying tyrant, and in a solemn voice said, "In the last place you must give "back freedom to the Florentines." For a moment Lorenzo cowered before that stern and piercing glance, and that terrible voice, then turning his back indignantly, he spake no word more. Tortured by remorse he breathed his last soon after, and Savonarola departed without granting him the absolution he sought. Hard and cruel—say some, but Savonarola believed not in the value of absolution where no repentance was. On the 8th of April, 1492, occurred this terrible scene.*

With the death of Lorenzo the spell of the Medician rule in Florence was broken. Pazzi conspiracies and other signs of discontent had preceded the death of Lorenzo, but were held in check by him with the strong hand of a despot. His son Pietro, who succeeded to his place and power, was a weak but, perhaps, a well-meaning man, who found himself unable to cope with the contending factions, and Florence was thus for a time delivered up a prey to civil discord. It was to prevent this that Savonarola now put himself prominently forward on the political arena. Not alone in the churches did he preach in the spirit of the patriot, but in the public squares, day by day, and frequently several times a day, he harangued assembled thousands, calling them to a sense of their duty as men and citizens. Let them be united and they might be free, and re-establish their ancient liberties. Many, in their hatred for liberty, have taken occasion to libel the character of Savonarola in reference to this matter, and have represented him as stirring up the people to revolt against an established government with which they were satisfied, thus seeking to place this great and good man in the same category with the vulgar and ambitious demagogue who stirs up revolution to satisfy his own

* As so different an account of this matter is given by Roscoe in his life of Lorenzo, a book which is so generally read, it is necessary to remark that the truth of the account above given, for which Signor Villari, the latest biographer of Savonarola, is responsible, is fully attested by important existing documents quoted by him.

ambition. This is altogether a false view of the case. Savonarola was a true patriot in the matter.

We have already seen that Savonarola's hate of the Medician rule arose from the fact that it was a degrading tyranny, which sought to rivet itself on the people by ministering to their vices and undermining their self-respect. He felt, and wisely felt, that the elevation of the people, their moral and social reform, was impossible until this tyranny were destroyed. Alike as the reformer and the patriot, it was hateful to him. Still would he not have been justified in stirring up revolt unless in the last resort. But what are the facts of the case? The Medician tyranny had become weak as well as hateful. Opposed to the continuance of Pietro's government was an aristocratic party, as well as the people; the aim of this party was to establish their own authority, and with their success the people would have groaned under a worse tyranny than before. It was the duty of Savonarola to put the people on their guard; to establish their unity, so that now, that the overthrow of the Medici was imminent, they might regain their freedom, and not exchange their golden fetters for chains of iron. Not as an ambitious and selfish demagogue, but as the true patriot and lover of the people, it was that Savonarola worked. He looked at this matter not as a political adventurer, but in the light of a religious duty. And as to risking bloodshed, it was owing to him that scarce any blood was shed on the occasion of the expulsion of the Medici from Florence—that the revolution by which the Florentines regained their liberties was a bloodless one. Would that the people had been worthy of the man who thus worked for them!

Savonarola's hope was to establish in Florence a Theocratic Republic; a government founded on obedience to the will of God. His views on this subject are left on record. We quote his own words: "As in everything, so, likewise, in the State, spiritual force is the best and worthiest of ruling powers. Hence it is that, even from the beginning, a still imperfect state of government will flourish in complete security, and, in time, acquire perfection, if it be always therein universally acknowledged that the end of the State is the improvement of the morals of the citizens by the withdrawing of all obscenity and all wickedness, and that the truly Christian life subsists in the fear [say, rather, love] of God—if, moreover, the Law of the Gospel [and it must be remembered that Savonarola looked upon the Gospel as embodying the entire and perfect law of God] be esteemed as the rule and measure of civil life, and of all laws that are made; if, further, all citizens shew a true love of their country, which, as pure, uncorrupted, self-love, subjects its own interests to the general good; if, finally, a general peace shall have been concluded among the citizens, all past injustice forgiven, and all elder hatred forgotten—such a unity will make strong within, secure and feared without." Ah, visionary and absurd, ridiculous and impossible! says the self-sufficient politician. What practical results could follow from such views? asks the so-called statesman. But, in truth, is the theory of a Theocratic Republic so very absurd? Is "government by God" altogether visionary? Is statesmanship based upon God's laws a ridiculous impossibility? These are questions it is worth our while to answer.

"I have always maintained," said Savonarola, "that a kingdom is so much the stronger, the more spiritual it is; and so much the more spiritual, the nearer it relates itself with God." And he was right. A republic, in the true sense of the term, that is to say, the highest form of government of which we can conceive, in which every man shall be a king and priest unto himself,

will never be a possibility among men, until the theocratic idea, which recognizes that God is the true governor of this world, and that none other is, has become an accepted belief—until a religious sanction is given to the performance of citizen duties. Does any man think the world would not have been better off, if, instead of submitting to kingly despotism, men had recognized the Eternal Father as their true king, had sought to obey His laws in their national life, and looked upon the performance of their functions as citizens in a religious light? A time will come, we doubt not, when it will be perceived that the social state, national life and progress, are governed by God-created laws, as unerring and as perfect as those which govern the physical universe; and when nations will see, not only that it is their duty, but, also, the highest political wisdom, to learn and obey those laws.

But it may be objected to these views that, by the connection of the State with religion, all sorts of evils have resulted to mankind. There is an apparent truth in the statement. It is necessary, therefore, to examine it. We ask, therefore, whether, in any correct sense, there has ever existed a connection between the State and religion? And we answer, emphatically—No! Priestcraft and Statecraft have entered into alliance. Kingcraft has used the superstition of men in order to rivet its fetters on them. But we deny that either Priestcraft or superstition is religion; we deny that Kingcraft or Statecraft have ever represented the true functions of the State. We have never yet had any real religious statesmanship, but is that a reason that we never should have any? True statesmanship would necessarily be religious. We say, therefore, that Savonarola, in enunciating the principle that politics and religion, statesmanship and morality, have an intimate connection, gave utterance to a truth the world has yet to learn; a truth which must form one of the fundamental principles of any real religious reform; and one which, as Religious Reformers, we have to teach.

It is the want of religion in our politics, which has led to so many of the evils we have to deplore. Can it be supposed that, if politics were religious, as they and everything else which pertains to man should be, much of the misery which attends bad government would not be swept away? If statesmanship were based upon morality, how much of the deplorable legislation which disgraces our statute-books, and oppresses the people, would be swept away, and how much yet to be enacted would be avoided! It appears to us, therefore, that the idea of divorcing politics from religion, of banishing all reference to the State and its functions, to government and its duties, from the pulpit, is one of the most egregious mistakes ever made. The true religious teacher will, on the contrary, find in these subjects a field for the exercise of his highest powers. If these truths had been generally acknowledged, and our politics had been governed by religious considerations, would thousands, nay, tens of thousands, of our people have been left to perish in ignorance—would our laws have taken no cognizance of vice and immorality, as is now the case? No, our statesmen would have seen, and practically used, the truth so long ago enunciated by Savonarola, as a necessary corollary from his theocratic principles, that "it is the business of the State to provide for the best possible education of all children, and to form good citizens of them." Recognizing these things, we, as Religious Reformers, then, would teach that religion and politics are intimately related with each other; we would have our legislation and our statesmanship the expression of God's truth and justice; and not, as now, of man's error, bigotry, prejudice, and injustice.

JAS. L. GOODING.

HINDOO TEACHERS.

ON the 2nd February, Ramchunder Vidabagis, the head pundit or professor of the Patshallah, delivered, in Bengalee, his first ethical lecture, to a very crowded audience, composed chiefly of the students of the Patshallah and of the Hindoo College; but among these were several native gentlemen, distinguished for the encouragement they give to the cause of education.

The professor commenced by announcing the subject, which he termed "Neetu Dursun," or the knowledge which leads to morality. He defined it, in the first instance, to consist in doing good and avoiding evil, and dilated upon the necessity and advantages of studying this science. He observed that the performance of moral acts, and the avoidance of those that are immoral, was the duty of mankind in every country, in every profession, and under every possible circumstance of life. Hence he drew the inference, that the study of morality was requisite for all; but for none more than those who, like the people of this country, were habitually disposed to be prodigal of their means in acts of folly, and parsimonious in those which were of real advantage. Among other illustrations, he mentioned the large sums his countrymen expended on their weddings, and the very little they bestowed on a good education of their offspring. But suppose, he proceeded, it were objected that men of good moral conduct are as liable to misery and misfortunes as those who follow a contrary course; and hence that the study of morality is not necessary for the happiness of man. He would reply, that the great distinction between the brute creation and the rational being consisted in the latter possessing a moral sense of good and evil, and the former being deprived of it, inasmuch as beasts of prey turn even upon their own feeders and keepers, to destroy the very source of their sustenance. If men of moral principles and correct conduct were sometimes unsuccessful in the acquirement of wealth, it was seldom such men did not, at least, command the esteem and respect of their fellow-creatures; and even if these were wanting, it could not be argued that moral education did not supply them with the means of being happy; all it could prove was, that such men, possessing the power of being happy, were prevented for a time from the enjoyment of happiness by fortuitous causes, over which they had no control.

Moral laws the lecturer divided into three classes. First, those that were of nature, and universally received in all countries and in every age; such as the prohibition against lying, robbing, murder, &c. The second he denominated conventional laws, or those by which the private relations of life were regulated; such as the laws of marriage, &c. The third class of laws was made by the ruling power for the protection of the weak against the oppression of the powerful. All these definitions and points the learned pundit illustrated and supported by quotations from the Vedas the Smriti and the other Shasters of undoubted authority. From these records he also pointed out that the ruling power was either vested in a prince or it emanated directly from the people themselves, and was exercised by their representatives. This latter form of government he proved to have existed among the people of India, where the legislative and executive authorities were vested in distinct and separate bodies. The professor then proceeded to consider the different periods of human life, with reference to their fitness for the acquirement of moral and general knowledge. According to the Shasters, these were divided into five. First, the period of infancy, which extended from the birth to the fifth year; during this period the mind was too incipient to acquire know-

ledge. The second period extended from the fifth to the sixteenth year, called boyhood; this was the best period for the study of all kinds of knowledge, in it the mind was vigorous and yet undisturbed by the potent causes which influence it in after life. The third period, youth, extended from the sixteenth to the thirtieth year; during this interval the sensual passions were predominant, they either distracted the mind, and so blinded reason as to lead man to the commission of various irregularities, or fixed him to the ardent pursuit of any particular object to the exclusion of all other acquirements, so that even if he had the inclination to pursue any of them he scarcely found time to do so; this, therefore, was not the fit period for study. Manhood was the next, which extended from the thirtieth to the fifty-fifth year; in it man was burdened with the cares of an increasing family, and was constantly distracted with the thoughts of making a provision for it. The closing period of human existence was from the fifty-fifth year onwards, called old age, the unfitness of which for study did not require many words to point out. The lecturer now proceeded to impress upon the minds of his youthful auditors that they were now in that period of life which was best adapted for the acquirement of knowledge, and it was their duty to take advantage of passing moments. After various remarks and illustrations on the foregoing important points, he laid down the following as the heads of the lectures he intended to deliver on ethics, and which we quote as illustrating the character of the native teaching, amongst a people whom missionaries delight to term benighted;—

1. Introductory discourse, showing the necessity and advantages of moral instruction (now delivered).
2. On the reciprocal rights and duties of parents and children.
3. On the necessity and advantages of education.
4. On truth and falsehood.
5. On gratitude.
6. On friendship and its duties.
7. On benevolence.
8. On the passions.
9. On modesty.
10. On patriotism.
11. On revenge.
12. On the institution of marriage and the disadvantages of polygamy.
13. On adultery.
14. On the disadvantages of gambling.
15. On charity and its proper objects.
16. On the advantages of historical studies.
17. On travelling.
18. On commerce.
19. On peace and war.
20. On the origin and necessity of government, and the principal forms thereof now prevalent in the world.
21. On the necessity of obedience to the lawful authority, and the liberty of the subject.
22. On the origin and the institution of law.
23. On international law.
24. A concluding lecture.

NEWMAN STREET FREE CHURCH SUNDAY LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

JESUS KEEPING THE LAST PASSOVER.

(Continued from p. 252.)

THE popular theory of the establishment of the Lord's Supper is, that Jesus, knowing those things which were about to occur to him—that is, his arrest, trial, and crucifixion—desired to spend an evening with his disciples, desired, in fact, to eat the passover with them before the separation. To this end he commanded them to prepare the Supper in an upper room in Jerusalem, where, when the evening was come, he sat down with the twelve. It is supposed (1) that in the course of the evening he washed his disciples' feet, and thus rebuked them for their worldliness and spirit of contention, which even at such solemn moments had led to contests about priority in the coming kingdom: (2) That during the meal a conversation occurred, in which Judas was so distinctly singled out and declared

to be the traitor who was to betray his Master, that no shade of doubt could be left upon any mind regarding the nature of his intended action, for when he rose to quit the supper room it was as that one son of perdition who, above all others, had proved unfaithful: (3) That, among other remarkable events, Peter was distinctly informed by Jesus that, notwithstanding all his protests to the contrary, before the cock crew he would deny his master: (4) That, supper being done, Jesus took bread and wine and gave it to his disciples, charging them that whenever assembled together they should do the same in remembrance of him: (5) And, finally, that, by way of closing the meeting, Jesus delivered a long discourse, in which sentiments were expressed which reflect infinite honour upon his character, and prove him to have been superhuman. All this is spoken of as being historical, in a sense hardly to be predicated of any mere human history; for the assumption is, that we are here put into possession of the facts in such a form as to render it impossible for any mistake to be made in conceiving the true order and nature of the incidents.

But although painters and poets have dealt with this scene, and its single incidents, as if they were too completely fixed to admit of modification, and divines have dealt with it as lying beyond the power of critical decomposition, it must still be confessed that, unless our imagination be called into play to arrange the incidents, it is impossible to avoid various incongruities and contradictions. The authors of our Gospels have introduced various startling statements, which must be omitted or altered if we are to form a consecutive narrative, and the difficulty lies in determining which of these courses is to be pursued. Directly a thinking man sits down to write out the whole of the matter set forth in the Gospels, in relation to this event, and endeavours to conceive all the incidents in the order in which they occurred, he finds himself surrounded by previously unsuspected difficulties, some of which I shall now lay before you.

(1) The first which suggests itself is this: Who first named the necessity for preparing for the passover? In the first Gospel it is written:—"Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand: I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples."* The second Gospel contains precisely the same idea and nearly the same words; but in the third we read:—"Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?"† At first the variation in the narrative appears trifling; but when it is asked, Who first named the subject, how shall we answer? Was it the disciples who first came to Jesus to ask where it should be prepared? Or, was it Jesus who first commanded Peter and John to make ready, which caused them to inquire where it was to be done?

(2) It is somewhat important to inquire whether the writers of the first three Gospels intend us to understand that it was by a supernatural power that Jesus named the place where the man was to be found who was to supply the chamber. In the first narrative, it is clear a well-known individual was spoken of; while it seems as if the name of this person were purposely omitted. "And he said, Go into the city to such a man" (*τὸν δεῖνα*), or as we say, "Go to Mr. What-do-ye-call," when either we have forgotten or do not care to name the man. Of course, there can be no question that a known person was alluded to; the disciples were not left in suspense as to the man, neither were they in any doubt or difficulty about finding him. And yet such could not have been their case, if the account as rendered in the second and third Gospels be correct. In one of those, it is said: "And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the

* Matt. xxvi. 17, 18.

† Luke xxii. 7-9.

"passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us."* According to this, the disciples, when they quitted Jesus, did not know whom they were to meet, or where the passover was to be made ready; they were to find a man who was evidently a stranger unto them, and he would lead the way to a house which, without such guidance, they could not have found. How, then, are we to answer the questions, Did Peter and John know unto whom they were to go when they quitted Jesus to prepare the passover meal? Did they go to a man known to them, or were they to be led by an unknown?

(3) There has been much debating about whether Jesus had not already made arrangements with the man who was to supply the chamber. Did he know, in virtue of some supernatural powers, that, purely by accident, a man would be at such a place with a pitcher, and that he would go to a house in which there would be room for the disciples? or, had he previously arranged with the owner of the house, and was the pitcher a sign which had been agreed upon as a guide to the messengers? Say, for instance, that in Jerusalem there was a man who had secretly become a disciple of Jesus, and had a room large enough for the desired purpose, the use of which he had promised to Jesus. It may have been that profound secrecy was necessary. The authorities justify our believing there was danger in publicity, and, consequently, it may have been arranged that at a certain time and place a man should be in waiting with a pitcher, to lead those to the house whom Jesus sent. There are difficulties about this not easily set aside; for how could the disciples have been ignorant of the whole proceeding? They must have known those who were secretly well-affected toward Jesus as well as himself.

But when considered as a miracle, it is equally difficult. For, is it possible to believe that a man who would allow his upper room to be used by a body of strangers, would have it unengaged at a time when, through the crowding in the city because of the Passover, there was a great demand for space? He must have been miraculously prevented from letting it! Neander "sees no miracle in it,"† and contends that Luke does not intend to represent it in that light; he believes in the pre-engagement, and certainly that is the most natural explanation of the whole transaction. They who insist upon the supernatural element are but creating difficulties which they have no means of removing, and, in fact, are multiplying contradictions which are already too numerous.

(4) It may seem out of place, after the preceding, to ask the question, Whether this supper was eaten in Jerusalem or in Bethany? and yet this inquiry cannot be avoided. The writers of the first three Gospels are unanimous in fixing it in Jerusalem; they speak of the disciples having been sent into the city for no other purpose than that of preparing it, and their entire narrative is based upon the 'upper chamber in Jerusalem' theory. Yet if the narrative furnished in the fourth Gospel be correct, and if that is to be taken as a correct setting forth of the last supper and its incidents, then undoubtedly it was eaten in Bethany—not in Jerusalem. It is quite clear from John, that Jesus was in the habit of returning to Bethany every evening; and as nothing is said by that writer about sending into the city, we can understand his narrative only in the sense of meaning that it was in the house of Martha and Mary the closing meal was eaten.

(5) But we have now to consider when this supper was eaten. Was there any supper in the sense in which it is ordinarily understood? Or, to put the question in another form, Did Jesus really partake of the Passover? The first three Evangelists state, that the night before he suffered he partook of that feast. That this is their meaning cannot be doubted. The first says, that the disciples went into the city as Jesus had commanded them, and "made ready the passover." To which he adds: "Now when the evening was come, he sat down with the twelve,"‡ "and as they did eat," &c. The third puts it in the following unquestionable form—the disciples "Made ready the passover: And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say

* Mark xiv. 13 15.

† Life of Christ, p. 427.

‡ Matthew, xxvi. 20.

"unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."* If this be taken in connection with the preceding conversations, and those which are reported as occurring at the table, it will be admitted as unquestionable that the authors of the first three Gospels—Mark merely repeating Matthew—intended their readers to understand that, not only did Jesus keep the passover with his disciples, but also that it was his last supper with them before his arrest.

In like manner John speaks of Jesus celebrating a supper on that night, which must be the same, because the circumstances are alike. There can be little doubt that in John† the very same supper is described as in the passages quoted from the first three Evangelists. The legal period at which the passover was celebrated was the 14th of Nisan. Hence we infer that Jesus kept the passover on the night of Thursday the 14th of Nisan. Such is the plain conclusion to which the accounts in the first three Gospels directly lead. But the narrative of John presents serious obstacles in the way of this statement. This apostle says, "Now, before the feast of the passover," at the very beginning of his description of the supper. Hence it could not have been the paschal supper which Jesus then partook of. Again, he says that the Jews who brought Jesus to Pilate the morning after the supper would not enter the judgment-hall lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover. Thirdly, the morning after the supper is called the preparation of the passover, the day on which Christ suffered. Fourthly, in the course of the supper, the feast is supposed to be still future: "Buy those things that we have need of against the feast." Fifthly, amid the deliberations relating to the disposal of Jesus, Pilate speaks of the passover as either at hand or just begun that morning, but not yet past: "Ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the passover." Sixthly, the day after the crucifixion being the Jewish sabbath, and called a great day, must have been so styled because it coincided with the first day of the festival, or the 15th of Nisan.

This is admitted to be one of the most perplexing discrepancies in the Gospels. Dr. Davidson says, "When we consider that the apostles were present—eye-witnesses of the occurrence—partakers of the supper they speak of—it seems to us impossible that there can be an irreconcilable contradiction between Matthew and John. Yet able writers like Meyer and Bleek assume here an absolute contradiction; and the necessity of the case may perhaps exempt them from censure; but we cannot believe that the understandings or memories of the apostles were of a kind to misapprehend a matter of fact like the present. They must have known and remembered the event. It was a memorable evening, the solemn occurrences of which must have made a lasting impression on their minds and hearts. How could any of them ever mistake or forget the very night on which they partook of the last supper with the Saviour—on which he was betrayed into the hands of sinners?"‡

This is candid writing, and it is to be regretted that Dr. Davidson has been so scandalously treated by the Independents, in consequence of his having made these and similar admissions. He did no more than the text and truth demands, but he has had to pay the terrible penalty of having his prospects ruined. Still the facts remain the same. Ten thousand Davidsons may be driven from their chairs as professors, because of admitting the truth, still it remains unalterable; and they who howl at it, are but testifying to their own weakness.

(To be continued.)

* Luke xxii. 14-16.

† Chap. xiii. 1.

‡ Introduction to the Old Test., pp. 534-5.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XXII.

A CONFERENCE IN THE RECTORY.

AFTER his return from the Court, the events recorded in the last chapter having made a very deep impression upon his mind, Lester was for some time unable to dress and make his usual preparations before descending to dinner. Jane was rather alarmed that "Master George" had not answered her double summons, twice repeated by tongue and bell; and when Ella went up to his room to inquire if he were unwell, she was astonished at finding him buried so deeply in thought, that he paid no attention to her knock, and saw her not when, in a state of alarm, she entered the apartment. Roused from his reflections by her anxious address, he answered her questions in a very confused manner; but speedily becoming conscious of the fact that she was painfully impressed, he hastened to relieve her mind by relating what had occurred during his absence, not even omitting the conversation with Stokes; and closed by saying that he was as completely confounded by the Christian kindness and justice of the shoemaker, as by the absence of those qualities from their more orthodox and wealthy neighbours.

Ella was shocked by the story of Walters' death, but not so much astounded as her brother at the want of charity displayed by the Bench. Her own observation, and what she had learnt in the cottages of the poor, had prepared her to expect all that Lester described; but as Barrington was below, and the dinner was ready, she urged that, instead of dwelling upon the theme just then, they should descend to the dining-parlour, and, the meal despatched, make it the subject of their evening conversation.

"But," said Lester, "at present I care neither for eating nor drinking, for society nor courtesy. How can I sit down to a well-supplied table, being certain, as I am, that among my own parishioners there are many who are without the common necessities of life? What am I, that I should be plenti-

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES. VOL. II.

T

fully supplied and they be left to starve? And, in truth the, voice of that poor widow rings in my ears so painfully that it converts all the ordinary sources of pleasure into sources of pain, and seems to make all apologies nothing more than a bitter mockery. I both see and hear her, but, thank God! not as one of those who refused mercy to her unfortunate husband."

"But, George, have you not frequently argued in your discourses that we are not responsible for the evil now existing in the world, but only for this, that we each shall do all in our power to assist in blotting it out? You are doing this as earnestly as any one can do, and why not find consolation in that conviction?"

"Yes, Ella, I have argued thus, and I dare say I ought to be content with my own mode of solving the difficulty, but I am not and I cannot be. Were I called upon to advise a brother who had just lost a sister he loved, I know what would be my argument; yet were you to die, the same arguments used to myself would be utterly powerless to charm away my grief. When the blow falls upon ourselves we feel it too acutely to be soothed by mere words, however ready to admit their truth in a philosophical sense. The theory of duty, and the sympathies and emotions of human nature, seem to be widely at variance. And just now the fact has been painfully impressed upon my mind that the men of power are selfish and unjust, and I cannot but feel for the bitterness of the poor man's lot, who is compelled to bear the insults and to bend beneath the wrong. Why should such things be? Why are such men entrusted with power which they use so badly? I felt to-day that, had it been within reach of my power, I should have palsied the tongues of those magistrates when they were about to decree sentence; and now, as if I were the poorest beggar and most uncultivated hind in the shire, I am asking why God, as the moral governor, did not do as I should have done? There are many apologies for men in great agony denying that there is a God, and if I heard that poor widow preaching atheism at the Market Cross, I should not dare to contradict her, although I hate the atheist theory."

"But, George, why not talk upon this subject to our friend below? I have constantly wished you both to abstain from religious debates which I feared would be injurious to your friendship and peace of mind. Yet now I feel that it would be infinitely better were you to open your mind freely unto some one, and why not unto him? Probably, he could render some real assistance."

As she said, Ella had desired the avoidance of that subject; for, with a growing partiality for Barrington, there had come a nervous dread lest he should be led into making religious avowals which it would be impossible for Lester to tolerate—avowals he could not hear without putting an end to the friendship. The evening conversations had become quite a looked-for luxury, and, although she knew pretty well Barrington's actual convictions, without even admitting it to herself, she desired to have silence preserved about them. This, however, could be no longer; and, thinking only of her brother's welfare, she urged how much it was to be lamented that religious topics had been so carefully avoided in all the preceding conversations.

"Yes, Ella," said Lester, "I have avoided talking to Barrington upon these subjects, but I shall do so no longer. My mind is harassed and borne down by awful doubts, and unless I can talk them over with some reasonable person, I shall either go mad or become an unbeliever. The conduct of leading churchmen in my own congregation makes me doubt if any of them believe in the Scripture revelation. God and you, Ella, both know with what hopes I commenced my ministry in Crosswood. I thought to do something towards

bringing about the time when men shall endeavour to deal justly with one another; but instead of succeeding, every step I take seems to lead me farther from my object. If I defend the poor and adopt means to secure them fair treatment, then the rich hint that I am either democratic, impractical, or a mere visionary; and if I tell the poor of their faults, as a rule, they rush to the conclusion that I am desirous of strengthening the hands of those who deal unfairly by them. There are moments when I positively doubt if my entrance into the Church was not a mistake; then I doubt if the Church theory is not false, and if I am doing anything more than merely playing a part, as if life were a solemn farce. I cannot any longer endure the torture to which these doubts give rise; I must solve them and find my true vocation."

Ella heard this revelation without manifesting any surprise; she had long felt that her brother was becoming more and more uncomfortable, yet, with the faith of woman in the ultimate triumph of goodness, she had not doubted that all would be well in the end. Her tenderness and exquisite tact were now successfully displayed in chasing away the gloomy thoughts which held her brother a prisoner, so that within a quarter of an hour, although a shade of sorrow was upon his brow, he sat with somewhat of his usual composure.

Under the circumstances, the dinner passed off more quietly than usual, but the cloth had scarcely been removed before Lester was again deep in the all-absorbing narrative; when, although it was detailed to Barrington with greater fullness than it had been given to Ella, it was closed in the same manner, and in precisely the same words.

Barrington protested that instead of marvelling at the absence of those virtues in orthodox cases, and their presence in others, to him the sole source of wonder, the only proper cause, was that Lester should have expected kindness and justice from ordinary Christian men and women.

"I contend," he continued, "that, as a rule, all orthodox Christian people are sharp practitioners, who will neither overlook the weaknesses of their servants, nor cease to punish crime as with a rod of iron. They make less allowance for human weakness, and take less notice of human endurance, than others who are not admitted to Church communion. The Turk is kinder to his servant than the Christian is. The latter asks for absolute submission, and, when we hear so much said about the wickedness and ingratitude of servants, we may set down above one-half of the evil to the tyranny of their masters. That was a bitter, yet a true, saying of the American slave, that the black man had a better time of it with those who never went to church than with those who were ever going, which caused him to hope that he should not be purchased by a church-going master."

"Yet, Barrington, you will confess that they are taught the contrary. Our Church, and, indeed, all connected with the Christian religion, rests upon love and forbearance, upon justice and charity."

"True, in theory it does, but not in fact, not as it is conceived by the majority of Christians. They believe that 'human works are but filthy rags;' that there is nothing to be done by themselves through which to win 'the favour of God,' and that a sort of abstract 'faith' is the only essential to 'perfect redemption.' Those who sat upon the Bench to-day felt secure in this, that the act of pardoning Walters could not promote their salvation."

"Yet every Christian admits it to be a duty to be instant in season with good words and works."

"True, Lester, but only theoretically, and it cannot be otherwise, while the doctrine of salvation through the blood of another is generally believed.

Man works only upon compulsion, and if told that all his works will be vain, he will not trouble himself about doing aught. The great evil I see in the doctrine of fatalism lies in this, that it strips men of their energy, and leaves them without any absolute necessity for doing good. The Calvinist rests in the conviction that all things were preordained, and the 'therefore, it is useless for us to trouble about them' is quite natural. So, also, with the ordinary believers. The form is changed, but not the nature of the belief; it is still supposed that men are to be saved by foreign agencies, and hence it comes that working is of no practical value."

"I am surprised, Barrington, that you should have fallen into the error of confounding such dissimilar ideas. There is not a Christian in the land who does not believe in the necessity of good works, neither was there ever a preacher who taught them to do evil ones. They say no more than this, that our good works, in Time, taken at the best, are too unimportant to work our salvation in Eternity. They hold themselves bound to perform good actions, but not to rely upon, or to be proud of them."

"It comes to the same thing, Lester; the difference is more verbal than real, and man cannot be induced to labour for what he deems to be an illusion. The idea is, that practically good works are useless, for, whether done or not, the order of events will not be changed; and it is that which renders the doctrine so pernicious. I maintain that it is through the good deeds, the heroisms, self-sacrifices, patience in research, and love of truth, that the progress of the world has been secured. Christian people go to church and chapel to talk about Zion, and denounce, as 'children of the world,' the very persons who, as scientific, philosophic, and even as business men, are working out the salvation of our race. Such men are doing what is necessary to elevate men from thoughtless savages into thinking beings, and unless success follows their efforts, all the hopes of human progress are utterly vain."

"According to that, Barrington, I ought to leave the pulpit, in order to study science, and then go out to teach it. You seem to believe that Christian teaching is altogether vain. Give us your opinion upon that point."

"Well, Lester, my candid opinion of the matter is soon given. I believe that what is called the 'Christianity of England' is fast ruining the people. It is not a religion, but merely the apology for having no religion. Men, now-a-days, try to persuade themselves that they are religious, but it's very difficult to do it. There was a time when there was little talk about it, but the emotion was in all hearts. The Church, however, has nearly completed its mission, which I conceive to have been the positive slaughter of Christianity. All of it which remains, has been preserved by men who never enter the public temples. The 'infidels' of England have done more to keep alive the spirit of religious thought than all the Churches. The latter are content to send men to sleep, saying, 'Soul, take thine ease, for thou art safe and 'saved;' but when the former ask whether we have any soul to be saved, they produce that inquiry and thought, which prevent mental and spiritual stagnation."

"Then your theory is that the Freethinkers have proved to be the true friends of religion?"

"Undoubtedly, they have; and no Churchman, even supposing his theory to be correct, will deny that fact. For instance, from whence came all those works which are now relied upon as the great armoury of the Christian faith, Clarke on the Attributes, the Analogy, and similar works? They were written

as defences, and would not have existed but for the freethought efforts. I do not believe them to be of value beyond this, the proof they furnish of the weakness of the Christian theory and evidences; but even they who admire them must admit that without the freethought stimulant, they would never have come into existence. I know, indeed, that there are old cathedral bats who protest that it would be much better if men believed without having recourse to such treatises, just as if faith without reason, or conviction without intellectual perception, were the most desirable of virtues."

"But it could not be said that this is the freethought virtue, that the Freethinkers desired to produce such books. They had no such design, and should have no praise for it."

"Granted, that their virtue in this is negative; but they have the positive virtue of speaking to the heart, and rousing the spirit of independence. They have taught that man must respect himself as the first step to anything noble. If, in the course of their lives, men are to do great things, it is of the utmost consequence they should have faith both in the stability of the world, and the dignity and moral greatness of human nature, but in modern times the pulpits are filled by those who prate about the end of the present condition of sublunary things, and who speak of man in terms befitting none but those who were created by a devil. They imagine it possible to give glory to God by snubbing his handiest and completest work."

"They speak of man," said Ella, "not as God made him, but as the devil left him."

"That is their meaning I grant; but, Miss Lester, is it not positively absurd to speak of an Omnipotent God creating man for His glory, and then, in the next breath, to assume that a dependant fiend could have overturned the Omnipotent purposes? But, probably, you are not aware of the fact that I do not believe in the existence of a devil."

"Yes, I know your belief, and wish it were true; facts, however, are against you. How else can you account for the sins and miseries of mankind, than by believing in a spiritual adversary who labours to poison the springs of goodness?"

"There is no devil, Ella, so potent as that which we create by our ignorance, mingled with our presumption. In times of old, men were perfectly certain that all diseases were either direct punishments from heaven or miseries created by the Devil—they, in either case, believed them to be supernatural. And what resulted? Simply this, that they were crippled by their false notions, and did nothing to stay the diseases. But a band of denounced men set to work to discover the truth—to find out the true sources of plagues, agues, and fevers; and it is now known that our own follies and violations of natural laws are the sole sources of nineteen-twentieths of our suffering. We no longer believe in the Devil causing the gout, or indigestion, or any other diseases, because of being able to account for their origin in other ways. Precisely so with thunder and lightning, and all the convulsive natural phenomena of nature. Time was when men believed that these were the result of evil supernatural action, but now that, through the discoveries of denounced men, the truth is made clear, we no longer think of ascribing them to the action of a fiend. In like manner, I account for all the prevailing evils; they are the result of actions, done in ignorance, it may be, but done by human beings, and not by supernatural powers. Yet while the Church, ignoring facts and reason, continues to dogmatise upon the subject, we shall have all these ascribed to the influence of the great adversary, to the malignity

of Satan; but once give free scope to reason to watch and work in those fields, as it has already done in the others I have named, and we shall be set free, not only from the superstitious dread, but shall also be put into the way of obliterating the evils themselves. And here, Lester, I come to the answer to your question. I believe that the Churches hinder the progress of goodness—unintentionally, I admit—by opposing the adoption of those means through which alone it can be secured. There are thousands of good men as thoroughly convinced that they know all about the ins and outs, and constitution, of human nature, as their ancestors were that they knew all about the stars and the earth, planets and continents; and because of being so sure, they fight against Phrenology, Mesmerism, and all the modern systems, through which it is suggested that we can gain a clearer knowledge of ourselves."

"But surely you do not vindicate Phrenology, Mesmerism, and other similar absurdities," asked Lester, as doubting if he heard correctly.

"No, I do not vindicate them, nor do I denounce them as absurdities. I do not know enough either about them or about the mental constitution, to speak so absolutely; but although that is the fact, I still believe, if not themselves true or complete sciences, they are steps in the right direction, which will lead to other discoveries of the most valuable character. They who denounce without understanding them, presume themselves to be sufficiently instructed already; they preach that we know all we can know, and instead of boldly spurring young men into pursuing any and every path of inquiry, they endeavour to prevent their stepping an inch beyond the proscribed theological line as much as possible. Thus they hinder progress by prohibiting inquiry in the very fields where the most beneficial results are to be looked for, and are practically the enemies while intending to be the friends of mankind. A short time back I heard a popular preacher descanting, in severe language, upon the 'iniquity of those arrogant pretenders who teach Phrenology.' This was done in language both offensive and presumptuous, and the preacher spake with the air of an adept, so that evidently, upon the minds of those who were as ignorant as himself, he made a deep impression. I sought him in the vestry after the service was over, and having told him I was deeply interested in the science, and desirous of discovering the truth, I inquired what book he had read upon the subject, when, to my utter astonishment, without blushing, nay expressing gratitude to God for the 'mercy,' he replied, that he had never wasted a moment in the reading of books upon such a wretched delusion. I leave you to judge of my feelings. But the contempt I felt for such arrogant ignorance prevented me both from knocking him down and losing another minute in his company. Evidently he was one of those impudent characters who, in the name of God, deceive and plunder His people. But he pleased those who, knowing nothing, believed themselves to know all."

"He was not a fair specimen of the modern preacher, Barrington."

"Perhaps not, and yet I believe that your modern preachers are far less learned than their immediate predecessors were. They are content with reading the table of contents, for few of them really read a book through, unless when intended to be used up in their discourses. They get a smattering of many things, but the knowledge of none; they are mere dependants upon the Church, and live by its means, but cannot build a Church for themselves."

"But," observed Lester, "you ignore the fact, that what they preach is of Divine Authority; they do not pretend of themselves to know what

they teach; they accept the Scriptures, they are bound by them; and before meeting your arguments I should like to hear what is your opinion of the Bible as an authority. If you repudiate that, then your argument against them will have more weight. For instance, if I stand up to maintain a doctrine which does violence to my moral instincts, as that there will be millions of men and women kept for ever burning in hell, and I can show it to be in the Bible, I have nothing more to do. Concede the authority of the Book, and all is settled; but until that is determined, I feel myself unequally matched, because any justification I offer seems to be altogether useless."

"Well, Lester, I have no objection, if you will permit me to proceed in my own way, to give my opinion of 'The Bible' as an authority; but, before doing so, I must protest against any man clinging to, and teaching, a doctrine which does violence to his moral nature. There is no written authority that can override the living authority of God speaking through the Conscience. If we violate that, then there is no hope of our becoming noble servants of the right. Were there ten thousand books filled with admonitions against 'taking thought for to-morrow,' I should still obey my conscience, which dictates that I am bound to consider and prepare for the morrows in which others may reap fruit from the labours I perform to-day. And, as to 'preaching doctrines' at all, I am dead against it—I am heartily sick of it. What's the use of spending our time arguing that men are 'bound to believe in the spiritual efficacy of infant baptism.' Who can be *bound* to believe? I believe that you are in trouble of mind, and very anxious to discover the whole truth in relation to religious matters, but I do so because I know the facts; the belief is not the result of any volition of my Will—I can't help it, and so I believe it. So it is with all doctrines; we assent to them, but scarcely ever believe them in any thorough manner. So that I advise preachers to talk about duties—not doctrines. Make a man a good worker, and he will soon become a sound believer. There are plenty of doctrinal Christians, but few practical ones: they remind me of an old apple tree which stood in my father's orchard—it was a splendid tree, with its broad branches, rich foliage, and beautiful blossom; but never by any chance could we get an apple from it. The doctrinal Christians are of that class. They have the theory of being good; but, when we ask for the fruit, behold, we have nothing more than heartburnings, hatred of infidels, and long prayers, but neither love, trust, nor charity. Don't shake your head at me thus, Lester, but remember the story you have told of this day's work, and then make ready to hear what is my opinion of 'The Bible.'"

A DISCOURSE WITH GOD.—In one sense the world is a conversation, a ceaseless communing with the Divine, enlarging ever on the spiritual ideal, on freedom and truth, and providence, and immortality. Heaven, indeed, invites us to intercourse, not in order that we should pretermitt our efforts or our vigilance, but that we should cherish the holy frame of mind which renders duty easy and labour light, makes day a loftier hope, a greater joy, ourselves wiser, better, more loving, and more true. For although we may sleep, God never sleeps. Though we may forget, He never forgets. Although we may pause, He never pauses. And in this infinitude of action, of perfection, and of care, in the least as in the greatest things, His most glorious attributes are seen.

THE TWO THIEVES AND THE CRUCIFIXION.

ONE of the most touching passages in the history of the crucifixion is that in which it is set forth how Jesus suffered between two thieves. All the writers agree in stating that two persons were put to death with him. John, however, does not describe them, but is content to say that "two others were crucified with him." The three first Gospels make them to be sinners, but two distinctly call them thieves, and it is that which makes the incident to be so touching. None can be satisfied if the good are compelled to associate with the evil—if the pure are constrained to enter into fellowship with the impure. Even the worst of tyrants have permitted political convicts to die by themselves; it has not been the custom to send the condemned patriot in the cart with condemned murderers, neither have the martyrs been called upon to die their death of agony in the company of thieves and forgers. Hence it is quite natural for us to feel an increased sympathy for Jesus, when we call to mind that he was grossly insulted in his moral nature when this companionship was forced upon him.

Apart, however, from this, the introduction of the two thieves into the narrative is productive of numerous difficulties, for divergent statements are made respecting their conduct unto Jesus. The first Gospel, after setting forth that, while upon the cross, Jesus was mocked by the bystanders, in reference to his inability to save himself, has this addition: "The thieves also which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth." * The second says: "And they that were crucified with him reviled him." † The fourth takes no notice of anything said by his companions in death, neither does it allude to any one mocking him while he was upon the cross, which is rather curious, if, as is generally supposed, John was the author, and was present at the crucifixion. But the most curious matter is that which is found in the third Gospel, to the effect that one thief reviled and the other applauded him. It is said that the soldiers mocked him, challenging him, if he were the King of the Jews, to save himself. "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." ‡

The contradiction between these statements is too palpable to need any pointing out; for while one declares that both the malefactors reviled him, the other asserts that one of the two defended him, and petitioned for salvation. Neither need it be formally proven that Christendom accepts the statement in Luke as correct, for it is impossible to forget that men in their last extremity are reminded of how the dying thief was pardoned and promised immediate admission into glory. Which, then, shall we say,—that both the thieves reviled Jesus, or that only one of them did so?

They who endeavour to harmonise the narratives are apt in suggesting that all the Evangelists are correct; we are to suppose both the thieves reviling at first, which is noticed by two writers; then, that one of them was converted, and, instead of continuing his reviling, he petitioned for assistance, and declared Jesus to be an innocent man. Only a weak mind can be satisfied with this flimsy evasion of the spirit of the narrative. Can we over-

* Matt. xxvii. 44.

† Mark xv. 32.

‡ Luke xxiii. 39-40.

look the fact, that they who are hung upon a cross are not in the condition to revile their companions? At such a time they think only of their own pain; thus, even if it were admitted that at first the two had reviled, we cannot believe in their continuing to attend to Jesus. Neither can we conceive of a man being converted under such circumstances, when the conversion involved obtaining a true knowledge of the moral character of Jesus. The thief is made to say, "This man hath done nothing amiss," and to understand what not even the disciples understood—the nature of the Kingdom of Jesus. Obviously that was knowledge he must have obtained before reaching Golgotha; and consequently, if he used the language put into his mouth by Luke, he could not have reviled, as set forth by Matthew and Mark.

It is, however, difficult to conceive that the class of men to which he belonged could have obtained clearer ideas of the true character of Jesus than were those entertained by his immediate disciples. The petition for remembrance involved the idea of a spiritual kingdom. No man already at the point of death, as a malefactor, would trouble about the prospective temporal kingdom of his companion, because, in his then condition, he could have no hope of living to enjoy it. So that if we say such a petition was presented, it must be concluded that it referred to an unworldly kingdom, a kingdom purely spiritual, and, consequently, the dying thief must have formed a clearer idea of the Messianic rule than the best-beloved and most instructed among the twelve apostles had done, for they firmly believed in the temporal kingdom, and up to the last moment were certain that Jesus was to restore the Kingdom of Israel.

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XLIII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

OF course the first prerequisite for the stability of such a State as Savonarola sought to establish in Florence is virtue on the part of the people. Savonarola, like many another noble mind, blinded by its earnest desire to work out to a success its own grand ideas, misjudged his means, and also the men with whom he had to work. A people cannot be changed in a moment, and those who had submitted so long to the despotism of the Medici, could not be rendered fit for self-government except by long training. The government established by Savonarola was too good for the people. Moreover, surrounded as it was by petty despotisms, it found enemies everywhere. In the goodness of his heart, Savonarola had prevailed upon the Florentines to let the adherents of the Medici remain in Florence, arguing that a proscription would be unworthy of a high-minded people. A general amnesty was therefore proclaimed. The result was that a body of unscrupulous partizans remained to conspire against the government, and, by underhand means, to disturb the peace of the Republic. It was a mistake, but a glorious one, and can add only to the respect of all good men for Savonarola.

Surrounded by enemies without, and containing traitors within, having no real moral basis, the ruin of the Republic was certain, even ere yet it was firmly established. It was not long before the government was reduced to fearful straits. The hatred of the aristocratic and monied classes added to the difficulties of the position, by creating class factions and monetary derangements. All these things show that Savonarola had misjudged his means; but he also misjudged the men with whom he had to work. His earnest denunciations of vice, all the more earnest that his aim was the moral elevation, as

well as the political freedom, of the people, bred an indiscriminating fanaticism in many of his hearers. The fact, too, that there was a spice of fanaticism in the religious enthusiasm of Savonarola himself cannot be overlooked by the candid mind, and this led him not unfrequently both into mistakes of judgment, and made him look leniently on many acts of pure fanaticism on the part of his followers. As an instance of this, some of the younger and less judicious of these had undertaken the expulsion from Florence of all obscene books, wanton statues and pictures, and other lascivious works of art. With this object they went from house to house, and gathered together all objects of censurable luxury. That there were many of these, the records still extant in relation to the connection of art and literature with vice in those times, and of which we shall in a future paper have somewhat to say, quite sufficiently prove. The carnival of the year 1497 was rendered remarkable by the famous "Anathema," or "Burning of the Vanities," in which all these things, thus gathered, were collected in one enormous pile and burnt by the hand of Savonarola, while the people sang psalms and hymns.

This event has been made the ground of bitter accusation against Savonarola of having been the enemy of art and literature. We do not defend such a mode of providing for the morality of a people, because by outward compulsion no man can be made moral. At the same time justice should be done. In the first place, it should be remembered that the thing was not initiated by Savonarola, and it seems to be clearly proven that three parts of the articles consumed were wanton tales and poems, gay disguises, masks, and other carnival adornments, which could have no artistic or literary value. If a few works of art did really perish, they probably deserved no better fate. That the incident forms no ground for accusing Savonarola of enmity to real art and literature is proved by other well-established facts in his career. He lived on terms of close intimacy with many of the most illustrious artists of his time. Michael Angelo was among his friends, and his followers included many persons celebrated both in literature and art.

But the fact that Savonarola was not the foe but the friend of art and literature is proven in connection with the sale of the confiscated Medician library, the facts relating to which are substantiated by Signor Villari. We follow his account. The Republic was in great need of money, and they had determined on selling the library to provide funds. The poverty of the citizens being no less than that of the Republic, great fear was entertained that that splendid library would be dispersed. Now the cloister of San Marco was possessed of a considerable sum of money, the result of the sale of their possessions, in accordance with the counsels of poverty given them by Savonarola. This money the Prior had the right to dispose of, and Savonarola determined to purchase the library, and add it to the convent library, which, be it remarked, was the only one in all Italy, which was open to the public. He accordingly bought the library for the sum of three thousand florins, paying down two thousand and giving a bond for the payment of the remainder. Thus Savonarola saved for the world that magnificent Laurentian library which, even in the present day, remains as one of the glories of Florence, and at that time contained the most perfect collection of Greek and Latin authors to be found in Europe, which were thus placed within the reach of the public, and became eminently serviceable in the revival of classical literature in that and immediately succeeding times. This, then, was the man whom so many have been ready to denounce as a "barbarous friar," "a burner of ancient MSS.," "an enemy to literature and to art."

Savonarola had long felt, as every honest and observant mind must have felt, that the degraded state of the morals of the people was traceable to the evil influence of the priesthood, and that every vice found in the Church at large was exaggerated in Rome, which was in truth the sink of every pollution. "The scandal begins at Rome," said he, "and goes through the whole." He had long been in the habit of speaking on this subject as boldly as on others:—"Their covetousness is monstrous; they will do anything for money. Their bells sound avarice. They sell the benefices—they sell the sacraments. There is no belief, no faith, no love, no virtue among them. It has become a shame to live well at Rome. Harlots go publicly to St. Peter; each priest has his concubine. They practise infamy without concealment." Such were some of his outspoken truths. "This poison," he said, "has so accumulated at Rome, that France, Germany, and all the world is infected with it." The man who had been in the habit of thus exposing the infamy of the Papal City, was not likely to withhold his voice when that monster of villany, Alexander VI. (Roderigo Borgia), secret poisoner, murderer, adulterer, seducer, stained with almost every crime, ascended the papal throne. Nor was such a pontiff likely to submit quietly, nor were the Dominicans, who have ever been in high favour in Rome, likely to lose an opportunity of denouncing the man who had exposed their vices; and who, as Prior of San Marco, had, with his congregation of monks, separated himself from them. Plenty of other enemies, also, both political and priestly, had Savonarola, who urged on the Pope to crush him.

Alexander knew Savonarola's strength, and determined to proceed warily. In the first instance, therefore, a papal brief was issued, directing Savonarola not to preach, as appointed, at Florence during the Lent of 1495, but at Lucca; the object was to remove him from Florence, where, at this time, he was in the height of his popularity. The popular indignation was aroused by the threatened loss of their favourite preacher; the man, too, who had done so much for Florence, and who was still so necessary to them. The magistracy and the government, whose right hand Savonarola was, were no less indignant. A letter was accordingly dispatched by the Florentine authorities to the Pope, expressive of their astonishment at this virtual proscription of a man whose life was blameless, and who had done no more than his duty. Savonarola would have been willing to leave the Pope's brief unanswered, with that fine confidence in God which ever fills the mind of the true man who knows the course he has taken is right, he said, "My children, you have done wrong, you should have left to God to provide." The Pope, though wishing to crush the man, had no desire to set the State of Florence in opposition to his authority, and so recalled his brief; Savonarola meanwhile pursuing the one course and preaching the same as ever.

Alexander VI., when he could not conquer a man by force, would seek to seduce him by fraud. 'As Savonarola was too strong to be met as an enemy, could he not silence him, at least, or might he not even make him his friend?' this is the idea now entertained by the Pope. He, accordingly, sent for a bishop of the Dominican Order, known as a wary man. "I desire," said the Pope, "that, as a brother of the same Order, you will answer the sermons of Savonarola, and prevail upon him to hold his peace in future." "Holy Father!" answered the bishop, "I am prepared to fulfil your commands; yet permit me to remark that, if I am to vanquish him, I must be supplied with arms." "Arms, what arms?" "This monk says we ought not to keep concubines, commit simony, or be guilty of licentiousness. If in this

"he speaks truly, what shall I reply?" "What, then, shall we do with him?" asked the Pontiff. "Reward him. Give him a red hat. Make of him a cardinal and a friend at once. Send to him Ludovico, a man equally learned with himself, and let him argue with Savonarola, not forgetting, as the strongest argument, this offer—to be promised on condition that he abstains from preaching, and retracts what he has said and written." Alexander was well pleased with the advice, and gave orders to have the same carried out. And with what result?

Brother Ludovico arrives in Florence, and seeks the cell of Savonarola. Kindly and willingly Savonarola listens to his arguments, for three whole days he debates point by point his conduct and his teaching, and is only the more convinced of his own propriety. At last, Ludovico offers the cardinalate, as an argument which even Savonarola must find unanswerable. "Come to my sermon to-morrow morning," said he, "and you shall hear my answer." Ludovico thought this delay promised victory; he attended the church at the time appointed, and what did he there hear? More violent denunciations than ever of the vice and venality found in Rome. "No other red hat (so Savonarola closed his sermon) will I have than that of martyrdom, coloured with my own blood." "Verily," said Ludovico, "this is a true servant of God." Thus baffled, what shall the Pope do? He will wait the course of events. It was about the middle of October, in the following year (1496), that he determined to proceed again to action. A second brief is now dispatched, citing Savonarola to Rome, and suspending him from preaching. But the dauntless monk continued his course undisturbed. Well, let it work! The Pope knew the force of superstition. It is not long before Savonarola is insulted while preaching. The Pope sees in this, disaffection in Florence. Now, then, the thunderbolt shall be discharged. In 1497, excommunication is pronounced against Savonarola as a heretic and disobedient.

Now is Savonarola to taste the bitterness of that cup which has been presented to so many a noble soul before and since—the ingratitude of a people for whom he had worked, and in whose behalf he would willingly have laid down his life. We have already pointed to the great mistake he had made in establishing a government founded on principles which demanded a virtuous people for their success. We have referred to the various sources of weakness found in the fanaticism of his followers, and the admixture of the same element in his own noble nature; and in the class factions and monetary difficulties of the Republic. Disaffection has done its work, and a handle is now afforded to the disaffected by the excommunication of the Founder of the Republic, and the suspicion of heresy attached to his name. The Pope's emissaries, in the shape of the Franciscan monks, are everywhere fanning the flame. A conspiracy to restore the Medici is discovered, and the traitors are justly made to suffer the penalty of their crime. Two of them were aged men. There is every reason to suppose Savonarola would have gladly saved them, but the government ordered their execution. Sympathy for them, co-operating with the disaffection, and the superstition of the people in reference to the excommunication and the suspicion of heresy, give the Franciscans a hold on the mind of the ignorant and fickle populace. Savonarola is denounced by the monks for having failed to save the two old men who had suffered death; and if he could not save them, then he cannot be powerful to defend the people from the evils threatened by the Pope,—so they argue, and with effect. And one more life-tragedy is soon to close.

JAS. L. GOODING.

BURNING THE STEPPES OF SOUTHERN RUSSIA.

A SINGULAR phenomenon of the steppe manifests itself when man presumptuously attempts to invade it with his plough. The disturbed soil immediately shoots forth every variety of *burian*, against which the farmer must exert unceasing vigilance, or else farewell to the hope of a productive harvest. If the same land is afterwards left fallow, the *burian* takes possession of the field, and riots for a few years in undisturbed luxuriance. A struggle then goes on for some years longer between the weeds and the grass; but the latter, strange to say, in almost every instance, triumphs in the end, and a beautiful pasture-ground succeeds, which goes on improving from year to year, till it attains its highest degree of perfection. A reaction then ensues. A species of coarse grass, known by botanists under the name of *stipa pinnata*, takes possession of the ground, which it covers with its hard and woody stems, till the farmer, taking advantage of the first dry weather in spring, clears away the whole plantation by setting fire to it.

The burning of the steppe is the only kind of manuring to which it is ever subjected, and is generally executed in spring, in order that a fresh crop of grass may immediately arise, like a young Phoenix, from the ashes. This department of Tartar husbandry is usually managed with much caution, and the conflagration rarely extends beyond the limits intended to be assigned to it; but sometimes a fire arises by accident, or in consequence of a malicious act of incendiarism, and then the "devouring element," as our newspapers call it, rages far and wide, sweeping along for hundreds of leagues, destroying cattle and corn-fields, and consuming not only single houses, but whole villages, in its way. These fires are more particularly dangerous in summer, owing to the inflammable condition, at that season, of almost every description of herbage. The flaming torrent advances then with irresistible force, towering up among the lofty thistles, or advancing with a stealthy snakelike step through the parched grass. Not even the wind can always arrest its destructive course, for a fire of this kind will go steaming in the very teeth of the wind, now slowly and then rapidly, according to the nature of the fuel that supplies its forces. At times the invader finds himself compressed between ravines, and appears to have spent his strength, but a few burning particles blown across by a gust of wind enable him to make good his position on new ground, and he loses no time in availing himself of the opportunity. A well-beaten road, a ravine, or a piece of sunk ground in which some remnant of moisture has kept the grass green, are the points of which advantage must be taken if the enemy's advance is to be stopped. At such places, accordingly, the shepherds and herdsmen post themselves. Trenches are hastily dug, the flying particles are carefully extinguished as they fall, and sometimes the attempt to stop the course of such a conflagration is attended with success. Often, however, the attempt fails, and the despairing husbandmen see one wheat-field after another in a blaze, their dwellings reduced to ashes, and the affrighted cattle scouring away over the plain before the advancing volumes of smoke.

The course of one of these steppen-fires is often most capricious. It will leave a tract of country uninjured, and travel on for eight or ten days into the interior, and the farmer whose land has been left untouched will begin to flatter himself with the belief that his corn and his cattle are safe; but all at once the foe returns with renewed vigour, and the scattered farm-houses, with the ricks of hay and corn grouped in disorder around, fall a prey to the remorseless destroyer. The farmer, however, is not without his consolation on these

occasions. The ashes of the herbage form an excellent manure for the ground, and the next crops invariably repay him a portion of his loss. Indeed, so beneficial is the effect, that many of the large proprietors subject their land regularly every four or five years to the process of burning; but this operation is then performed with much caution, wide trenches being first dug around the space within which it is intended that the fire should remain confined.

To the same process, likewise, are subjected the forests of reeds by which all the rivers of the steppe are fringed, but this is deemed so dangerous, that the law imposes banishment to Siberia as the penalty of the offence. Nevertheless, there are a few places where the reeds are not regularly burnt away each returning spring, at which season, during the night, the Dnieper and Dniester appear to be converted into rivers of fire. There are two motives for setting light to the reeds, and these motives are powerful enough completely to neutralize the dread of Siberia: in the first place, the reeds serve as a cover to multitudes of wolves, which, when driven by the fire either into the water or into the open plain, are easily destroyed by their remorseless enemies, the shepherds and herdsmen. The second motive is, the hope of obtaining a better supply of young reeds, by destroying the old ones. The reeds, it must be borne in mind, are of great value in the steppe, where, in the absence of timber and stones, they form the chief material for building.

NEWMAN STREET FREE CHURCH SUNDAY LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

JESUS KEEPING THE LAST PASSOVER.

(Continued from p. 268.)

THEY who maintain that the Evangelists agree in their notices of the day or evening on which the supper was eaten have a very difficult task, for by none other than a superhuman power can it be demonstrated. If the words in John can be repudiated—if, when he says it was the day of preparation, we are to understand “the day *after* the preparation,”—if, when he says the priests and others would not enter the Pagan hall of justice lest they should be defiled, and thus prevented from eating the great supper, he meant that they *had already* eaten the passover, then it will be easy to harmonise all the four Gospels, but nothing short of this will avail, for all the modes of harmonising them have signally failed. Most of those who have given their attention to this hopeless task have started with the assumption that there cannot be any error in the records, and have proposed such methods as their ingenuity could conceive, but without regard to the obvious meaning of the passages in dispute. With such, however, it is not worth while to spend a moment. Others, pursuing a different course, have assumed that Jesus kept the passover, but not upon the proper day; or, as others phrase it, he did keep it upon the proper day, which day, however, was not that generally believed by the Hebrew people. Of course, there is now no reason for assuming anything of the kind, except that of bringing the two contradictory stories into harmony. But they need not trouble themselves with such assumptions, for even if they could be made to bear investigation, there is no reason to believe that any body of intelligent men, who are unprejudiced, would admit such a mode of creating ten difficulties in order to destroy one.

Moreover, is it not astonishing that men who are constantly engaged in asserting that Jesus fulfilled the law, that he maintained the Mosaic system in all its integrity, not allowing a single jot or tittle to pass unnoticed or unobserved—that the Passover was typical of himself and his mission—and yet that he violated its letter as distinctly as to observe it twenty-four hours before the proper time. So far as the spirit of goodness is concerned, we are aware how little forms and ceremonies have

to do with it, either as regulating or defining its limits; but, when we have to do with men who defend the very letter of positive institutions, we are bound to estimate with precision the actual teaching of the disputed record. And surely Jesus could not have been justified in making this change, neither, if he had done so, would his disciples have understood it. They were bound by the popular Jewish ideas, and, consequently, must have protested against the violation of the Jewish law. In that case, instead of overlooking so important a point, the Synoptists would have furnished some reasons why Jesus antedated the proper day.

Of the incidents believed to have occurred at this supper it is not possible to present any harmonious picture. For instance, it is difficult to decide whether, if the Eucharist was partaken of, Judas was a partaker. Learned men are not agreed upon that point, for while many of them contend that "the traitor" was present when it was instituted, others contend that he had left the room. Neander was of opinion that "Jesus wished Judas to depart before he should institute the Lord's Supper,"* which caused him to utter the memorable words that led to his going finally to the chief priests and elders. An eminent writer in our own country so arranges the details, that he sends Judas out of the room before the conversation with Peter, and consequently before the bread and wine were handed round.† Substantially, Olshausen agrees with this,‡ and elsewhere he says, "From the idea of the holy supper itself, however, which must have been a feast of the most intimate love and union, it is in the highest degree probable that so depraved a member as Judas could have had no part in it: not to mention that it would have been even contrary to the love and mercy of the Lord to permit the traitor further to augment his guilt by partaking of it unworthily."§

The reason here assigned for believing he did not partake is repudiated by other theologians, who contend, that for the completion of his guilt this act was necessary. Stier says, "A correct harmony of the four Evangelists, and especially of the letter of St. Mark and St. Luke, forbids us to doubt that Judas received the sacrament with the rest, being included, as the lost one, in the 'for you.' This has been generally assumed from the earliest times, and has never been contested, save upon internal grounds.||" The truth of the last clause is questionable, but the former part seems to be borne out by the authorities, so far, at least, as any definite idea of the succession of events can be drawn from them. Yet, even then, we must discard some of them, for by no other means can the scene be realised. Matthew does not enter into details, for he dashes at once from the fact, that Jesus sat down with the twelve, into the narrative, that "as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, 'Lord, is it I?' And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said."¶ Mark merely repeats this statement with an almost verbal accuracy; but both of them place the conversation in such a position as to justify the belief that, if Judas went out, he did so before the solemn breaking of the bread.

As it has been observed, John says nothing of the "holy supper" being instituted, but he speaks of the detection of Judas. According to his narrative, after the supper, Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me;*** but they who heard looked doubtfully at one another, as not knowing whom he meant. It is said that Simon Peter pressed John to ask who it was. "Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly."†† After this follows the strange

* Life of Christ, p. 430. † The Diatessaron, pp. 364-368. ‡ Commentary, John xiii. 31-32.

§ Commentary, vol. iv. p. 10, 3rd ed., Clarke. || Words of the Lord Jesus, vol. vi. p. 143.

¶ Matthew, xxvi. 21-25.

*** John xiii. 21.

†† Ibid. 20, 27.

statement that "no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. "For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night."* And then follows some long and beautiful speeches, in which Jesus endeavours to impart strength unto his disciples, and indicates that Peter would deny him. Thus, according to this narrative, we have—1. the finished supper; 2. the feet-washing; 3. the detection of Judas; 4. the intimation to Peter; and 5. the triumphant speeches. But when we turn to Luke, all this is reversed. That writer says: "And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing."† Here we have the institution of the supper preceding the detection of Judas and the intimation to Peter; so that if the narrative be correct, Judas must have "partaken of the holy elements." How then shall we answer the question, Did Judas partake of them? How shall our painters proceed when they endeavour to reproduce the scene? Are they to follow Luke, and paint in Judas, or Matthew and Mark, when only eleven, instead of twelve, disciples will appear? If the incident be true, it must be worth while to discover its precise nature, and if not, then why should it figure so largely in the world of art? I am unable to speak absolutely in a case where the authorities are at variance. And unto him who, in the might of his orthodoxy, shall say that it is unimportant, I can only propose this question—Does the partaking of this rite, before doing a wicked deed, increase our sense of the criminality? If so, then we cannot decide fairly about Judas until this point has been cleared up; so that we may either say that he committed or escaped from so great a transgression.

The next incident is that just now spoken of, the predicted denial by Peter. At what point did that occur? Was it spoken while they sat at the table, or after they had all gone forth to the Mount of Olives? According to Matthew, "When they had sung an hymn [after the supper], they went out into the Mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples."‡ As usual, Mark merely repeats this statement, but both Luke and John report this as having occurred at the table after the supper.

(To be continued.)

* Matt. xxvi. 31-35.

† Luke xxii. 31-34.

‡ Ibid. 39.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR, IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.

CHAPTER XXII.

(Continued from p. 275.)

"PRAY don't be shocked at my free criticism," said Barrington, "for I must speak plainly; yet, in truth, it is a very awkward question to answer, What do you think of the Bible? You may as well ask, What do you think of the early English, German, or Sanscrit literature? For what is the Old Testament but a complete collection of the early Hebrew literature? It is composed of histories, legendary narratives, civil laws, poems of various shades from the Anacreontic to the ode of mourning; philosophical disquisitions and dramas."

"Dramas?" interposed Ella. "Surely you do not mean us to understand that there are plays in the Bible?"

"Ask your brother, Miss Lester," replied Barrington, "if the so-called 'Song of Solomon' and the 'Book of Job' are anything else than compositions intended for dramatic recital, if not for positive representation. In order to get rid of the obvious meanings of the former, the Church has prefixed certain notes to each 'chapter,' intended to convey the idea that the composition is a spiritual allegory, but nothing can possibly be more absurd. In sober reality, it is a very warm and passionate love-poem, running over with that kind of innocent sensuousness which, in the East, is tolerated without any thought of impropriety. Unhappily, in our translation the form of the composition is so strangely changed, that persons are deceived as to its real nature; and yet even in that form, when read carefully, the student cannot fail to discover the warmth and passion of love it embodies."

Ella still looked doubtfully at her brother, as asking, Is that a fair representation? He answered the mute appeal by candidly confessing that such was the fact; adding, however, by way of apology—

"The book has always been suspected, and many eminent Churchmen

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES, VOL. II.

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have contended for its exclusion; indeed, the Establishment does not read it in its lessons."

Barrington admitted that it was so, but immediately proceeded to argue, that the same cannot be said of the Book of Job.

"I am astonished," he continued, "that any scholar can be found to maintain its Hebrew origin. It is the noblest piece of writing in the entire collection—writing nobler in its aims cannot anywhere be found; and, as far as the poetical beauties and vivid pictures are concerned, they will ever rank with the best in any language. But it is the philosophy of the work which proves it to be quite other than of Hebrew origin. Job defends his 'innocency,' maintains that he has 'deserved the favour of God,' and demands that 'the Divine Being shall Himself enter the lists to justify His dealings with him.' He has no thought of being worthy of blame; and when his friends insinuate that he must have 'sinned,' he boldly denies the charge, and challenges the proof. The whole argument of Job is in direct opposition to modern theology and the popular views of human nature; and yet, at the close, Jehovah is represented as approving of what his servant Job had said."

"But," inquired Ella, "are we not told in the beginning that it was Satan who inflicted all the pains upon the Patriarch?"

"We are, but you will pardon me for saying that nobody believes it. Who believes in the Devil being a regular visitor in heaven? Who believes that with the sons of God the Evil One goes regularly up? If so, then what can Heaven be? The fact is, that the proem has been added by a later hand, who was alarmed by the doctrine of the poem itself, and who was familiar with the Persian doctrine of the sons of God and Ahriman. Moreover, the theory of Job is opposed to the other contents of the collection, for they are based upon the assumption, that the righteous will never be left in woe or suffering; while the wicked will not be allowed to prosper. Job maintains that such is not the case, and, with great boldness of language, he demonstrates his point. Doubtless, at first, when the work was translated into Hebrew, it was rudely treated; and after the Captivity, when the current literature was collected into one book, it was numbered with the others constituting the third class. Time operated in its favour, until, at length, the fact of its existence in Hebrew was looked upon as sufficient to prove its origin; but they who in modern times have been compelled to inquire into the subject, are perfectly certain that the conclusion was unsound."

Lester confessed that frequently when reading the book of Job, in the original, passages occurred which struck him as being very remarkable for their tone and temper of criticism, for their blasphemous boldness—or blasphemous according to our modern theories—so that he was predisposed to assent to the proposition of its authorship and theology being opposed to the theory of its Hebrew origin. "But," he continued, "if we merely preserve the book as a noble Asiatic poem, abandoning the ideas of its objective truth and its Hebrew birth, still there are other books which are its equal in depth and purity of thought."

"What! equal to Job!" exclaimed Barrington, "surely not; or if so; then, which are they?"

"Isaiah and Jeremiah! For what," asked Lester, "can be finer, either as poetry or philosophy, than some of the passages in the former?"

"Nothing, when they are rightly read and understood as they were originally composed, which, unfortunately, is seldom the case. People read their Isaiah as 'translated out of the original tongues,' actually imagining them-

selves to be in possession of a fair rendering of the Hebrew poems with their peculiar theories and strange forms of expression, little thinking how grossly they are deceived. Hamlet translated into French prose—all the similes being literally rendered, all the pauses omitted, all the names left out, and being parcelled into prose chapters, then to be chopped up by an idiot into verses—would be but a fair parallel to the Isaiah presented to the modern English reader. And yet men of position have the unblushing impudence to set forth that it is ‘finely translated!’ I wish it were well done, and for common use, for people’s eyes would soon be opened to the fact that all the early ‘chapters’ are noble poems, written by a true patriot, whose heart was moved by the difficulties of his countrymen, and who poured forth his indignation without measure or hindrance. What a picture is that, in the original, of what they call the fourteenth chapter of our translation—the death of the King of Babylon, and his descent into the place of the dead. I always admire the following expostulation of the travellers who find his body, as it is translated by Bishop Lowth:—

“He spake—he died. Distain’d with gore,
Beside yon yawning cavern hoar,
See where his livid corse is laid.
The aged pilgrim passing by,
Surveys him long with dubious eye;
And muses on his fate, and shakes his reverend head.
‘Just heaven! is thus thy pride imperial gone?
Is this poor heap of dust the King of Babylon?’

“‘Is this the man whose nod
Made the earth tremble; whose terrible rod
Levell’d her loftiest cities? Where he trod
Famine pursued and frowned;
Till Nature, groaning round,
Saw her rich realms transformed to deserts dry;
While at his crowded prison’s gate,
Grasping the keys of Fate,
Stood stern Captivity.
Vain man! behold thy righteous doom;
Behold the neighbouring monarch’s tomb:
The trophied arch, the breathing bust,
The laurel shades the sacred dust;
While thou, vile outcast, on the hostile plain,
Moulder’st a vulgar corse, amongst the vulgar slain.

“‘No trophied arch, no breathing bust,
Shall dignify thy trampled dust,
No laurel flourish o’er thy grave.
For why? Proud king, thy ruthless hand
Hurl’d desolation o’er the land,
And crushed the subject race, whom kings are born to save.
Eternal infamy shall blast thy name,
And all thy sons shall share their impious father’s shame.’”

Poetry, passion, and patriotism are all there; but they are skilfully made to disappear from our translation, which is completely bald; and so also is that of the descent into Shēol passage:—

“Hell, from her gulf profound,
Rouses at thine approach; and all around
Her dreadful notes of preparation sound.

See, at the awful call,
 Her shadowy heroes all,
 Ev'n mighty kings, the heirs of empire wide,
 Rising, with solemn state, and slow,
 From their sable thrones below,
 Meet, and insult thy pride!
 'What, dost thou join our ghostly train,
 A fleeting shadow, light and vain?
 Where is thy pomp, the festive throng,
 The revel dance, and wanton song?
 Proud King! Corruption fastens on thy breast,
 And calls her crawling broods, and bids them to the feast!'"

Evidently that was written by a man whose imagination was active, and whose heart was powerfully moved by the sufferings of his fellow-countrymen."

"No one denies that, Barrington. All the commentators are proud of being able to demonstrate it, and some of them have ventured upon naming Shakspeare side by side with Isaiah as inferior in the nobler passions. Yet I confess their theory of inspiration seems to contradict their admission. For if the poet wrote as a strong-souled man of the sorrows and wrongs endured by his people, we are hardly justified in concluding that he wrote also under the direct inspiration of heaven. That which came out of his own heart as a patriot-poet cannot be called heaven-given."

"Perhaps, Lester, it will be found that, after all, the true poets are inspired, and that Isaiah did but share the common lot. They all wrote in poetry more than they can explain in prose. And I don't care to question the inspiration theory. We have the poems, and cannot tell, in any case, how they were written. Let us take them as a rich bequest, and wisely make the best use of them. What I am annoyed about is this—that men should overlay the poetry of Isaiah with miserable theories of prophecy, pretending that his writings referred not to the events of his own age and country, but to those of a distant period, just as if he were a mere pump, out of which words were poured without consciousness or sympathy. The greatest enemies of the Hebrew poets cannot injure them more than these men do."

"I quite agree with you in that," said Lester, "for I have just completed the reading of a lot of books upon prophecy, and if I say that each contradicted the other, I shall only be saying what you know to be true. But what struck me most painfully was this, that men, who loudly profess to believe in the Scriptures as of God's creation—who cannot tolerate that any Freethinker shall be allowed to amend the text—should venture upon forcing the language into approving of their theories. They cut, and clip, and take such liberties with it, that, in many places, not a single sentence is left to be read according to the genius of the Hebrew language. One clips in one fashion, another in a contrary way, and what with the additions and omissions, the emendations and stretchings of difficult passages, I really was compelled to conclude that these men did not believe God to have been the author of the writings. Still, Barrington, while conceding this, and freely giving up the prophetic theory, I cannot but believe that the Hebrew people had a much clearer idea of God, in a spiritual sense, or as the Moral Governor of the world, than was possessed by any other people. They were never in any doubt about the Divine Unity, neither were they mistaken, as others were, about the moral order of things. And how can we account for their becoming wise above other nations, unless we suppose that in some remarkable way they were made the depositories of

the Divine secret? I confess that it is upon that point I am constrained to regard them as worthy of all honour. Their knowledge was superhuman, and must have come in a supernatural manner. I do not want to be dogmatic, but I believe that upon no other hypothesis can the facts be accounted for."

"That is to say, Lester, you believe the Hebrew books to contain clearer ideas of God—of His power, wisdom, and goodness, than can be found in any other. But while deeply regretting that you are unacquainted with the Asiatic languages and literature, I must firmly deny that there is any truth in your assumption. The reverse of your proposition is nearer the truth. They who spake the Sanscrit, who were well-read in the Hindoo philosophy, must have had a training in such matters, which raised them far above the Hebrew, and gave them nobler ideas of the Supreme Being. He who dwelt upon the banks of the Ganges could not have adopted the God of Jerusalem. The Jew was only satisfied with a God who walked, talked, and debated like a man; a God who was a sort of magnified mortal; a God who would dwell in a tabernacle, to make His presence known by means of smoke and fire; who would go in and out, and up and down with them, and while wielding the carnal sword, would march forth at their head to give them the victory over their enemies. They believed in a God who was amenable to human control, who could be as much the slave of human passions as themselves; who grew angry and relented; who delighted in pleasant odours and sounds, or who was ever ready to accept the hecatomb of victims which intolerance would offer up; but in such a belief there is nothing so very noble or elevating. The Hindoo was not led so far astray. He believed in a God who surpassed human comprehension, but who was alike the Creator and Sustainer of all animated nature;—a God who never failed to mark the conduct of His creatures, or to deal out rewards and punishments according to their deserts. And if we can hope to find in any ancient works, language which can be rightly spoken of as conveying the soul's thought of God, then it is in the works of the Hindoo philosopher alone that we can fairly hope to succeed in making that discovery."

"I have heard much of those works," said Lester, "and were I skilled in the Sanscrit, I would give them a careful reading."

"Your want of knowledge of the language need be no bar to their study, for many of them have been translated by competent hands. The Bhagavad-Gîtâ, as translated by Thompson, with its copious references and scholarly notes, will be quite sufficient to satisfy you how great is the error of supposing that the Hebrews had surpassed the other nations in their inquiries and knowledge upon those points. But even if the nations of India are omitted, still the same argument must be used in relation to the Egyptians; as a people they excelled the Hebrews alike in religious and moral philosophy. It is a mistake to suppose them to have worshipped many Gods, for they believed in One, and one only. It is true that He was known unto them by many names—was called upon by many names, but the people never understood that there were several Gods. Unless in the same sense that the Christian does, when he speaks of three Gods, 'Father, Son, and Spirit.' So also with the Persians, who were Monotheists, and in whose Sacred Books are as pure and noble passages as the finest in modern religious literature."

"But how comes it," inquired Ella, "that we always hear of those people as wretched Pagans, as 'benighted heathens'—why are they spoken of in such contemptuous language?"

"Because," replied Barrington, "it is a human weakness to fasten upon

the lower points in that which we disapprove, and upon the stronger and higher in that which we advocate. He who praises Shakspeare omits Pericles. If a Christian sits down to read the Vedas, he rather hunts after, and hopes to find objectionable passages, than reads the whole in order to discover its true spirit. Whereas, in reading the Bible, the same man looks only after the best, and tries to persuade himself, although lying open before his eyes, that in the Bible there are none to be ranked with the objectionable. While his daughter is reading, he rises, and bids her turn away to another chapter! He fastens upon some passages in the Psalms, but is silent about the coarseness of passages in Genesis, in Judges, in Samuel, the Kings, and in sundry other books. The truth-seeking man cannot do this—he reads them all as perfect wholes, and endeavours to estimate them as such. But by keeping his attention fixed only upon the worst parts, the Christian has managed to get up convictions that the ancient nations were without any true ideas of religion, and literally without God in the world, whereas, the truth is, that they were not a whit behind the Hebrews, and if we had become acquainted with the Indian literature at an earlier date, it is pretty certain that our modern theology would have been quite other than it is at present."

"Then you mean to say, Barrington, that the Bible ranks no higher than the other Sacred Books, and you will not allow it to be called a much superior authority?"

"Yes, that is exactly what I do mean. It is a grand old book, as all the others are grand; but so far as its intrinsic moral and religious value is concerned, that is not to be estimated by its antiquity. The oldest writing is not necessarily the truest. There are true words in it which I have not seen elsewhere, and in other books there are true things which it does not contain; but if we draw out from each the good and evil, the true and the untrue, there will be little left to boast of in favour of the Hebrew books. This, however, is not a truth which the people of Europe will be likely to accept. They do not know what the 'Pagan books' are, except by hearsay, and that is little likely to supply them with the means of forming a sound opinion; they believe as their fathers did; and upon the same principle that the Turks believe the Koran—they are afraid to read farther. By-and-bye the truth will leak out, and then woe betide the unhappy descendants of Melchisedek, and priests of all orders."

"That will be when your great book comes out, in which I presume all these knotty problems are to be finally solved."

"Yes, then, if you please; but, joking aside, Lester, we must not overlook the fact that the Bible is no longer either the household book or the guide of life; clergymen instruct their flocks that it is to be read in that light, but themselves are the first to decline its authority. In a theoretical sense they accept and are bound by it, but not practically, and the consequence is that their flocks refuse to believe a theory which the teacher will not reduce to practice. Moreover, in the present condition of Western Europe, it is absurd to ask them to do so. If a set of men were to itinerate through England as Jesus and his disciples itinerated about in Judea, depending upon alms as a means of subsistence, there can be no doubt they would be committed to the treadmill as rogues and vagabonds. Why, then, should we insist upon the same measure of obedience, when there is no longer the same measure of freedom?"

The entrance of Jane with coffee put an end to the discussion.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XLIV.

THE FINAL ISSUE.

THE fanatical folly of one of Savonarola's followers became the immediate cause of ruin to the New Republic, and of martyrdom for him. Fra Domenico, one of the monks of San Marco, smarting under the taunts of a Franciscan friar, undertook to prove the sacredness of Savonarola's mission by undergoing the fiery ordeal, if the Franciscan would do the same. The ignorant multitude gladly caught at the chance of a spectacle, while the disaffected parties promised themselves by this means a victory, and the Pope's adherents were overjoyed at the chance thus offered for ruining Savonarola. He deplored his follower's folly, but knew that to refuse the ordeal was certain ruin. He seems, however, to have hoped to evade it. He could not believe in its success, as it was part of his theological system to reject miracles—a signal proof how far he was before his age. The appointed day has arrived (April 7th, 1498). The huge pile of faggots and brushwood, eighty feet long, four feet thick, and six feet high, covered with oil and pitch, and sprinkled with gunpowder, is ready to be fired. Domenico has arrived, but requires to be allowed to carry a crucifix into the fire. "What! would you burn Christ?" Such is the cry. The Franciscans see their opportunity, and object to this. Domenico refuses to undertake the ordeal without it. And so the crowd are disappointed. The Franciscans eagerly embrace the chance of accusing Savonarola of having wished to burn Christ. The superstition of the crowd, combining with their rage at the disappointment, fomented by the disaffected, led them now to insult Savonarola, so lately their idol, and it is with difficulty that he and his monks escape with their lives back to San Marco.

On the morning of the 8th April, 1498, Savonarola entered the Church of San Marco, to preach for the last time. He preached briefly; and declared his readiness to die if need were in the cause of Truth. During the day the Franciscans lost no time in working upon the passions of the rabble, and the result of their work was seen in a riot which arose in the Cathedral of the Duomo in the afternoon. Brother Mariano, one of Savonarola's monks, had been in the habit of conducting the vesper service there, and as the hour approached the Cathedral was filled with the lowest of the populace, emissaries of the Pope, and adherents of the Medici. The vesper service was prolonged late into the evening, and then Mariano ascended the pulpit to preach. This was the signal. The cry arose on all sides, "To San Marco! To San Marco!" And the hostile crowd, ever increasing, flowed on its way towards the church and cloister of Savonarola: their path was marked with blood.

The people of the cloister are singing vespers, and Savonarola is at the altar, occupied in devotion. Nearer and nearer come the noise and clamour of the crowd. Presently the attack begins, by stones being cast into the church through the windows. Many of the brothers provided themselves with weapons, but Savonarola begged them not to resort to violence. They, however, determined on vigorous measures. The church doors are closed and barricaded. And now the siege begins. The monks fought bravely, and several of the besiegers were killed. At last the cry is raised, "Set fire to the doors!" The outer door being at length burned, an entrance was soon effected by the crowd. Now the fight within the church grows fast and furious. All night the fight continued, the mob of assailants constantly

increasing, armed with cross-bows, axes, and burning torches. Such as failed to find an entrance into the church began now to lay siege to the cloister. Large numbers of persons had already perished on both sides. Their want of success rendered the mob desperate, and, hounded on by the Franciscans and other enemies of Savonarola, many of them left the church and cloister in order to besiege and plunder the houses of such of the citizens as were known to be friends of Savonarola. It was now time for the government to interfere, which they did by summoning Savonarola to deliver himself up, under the promise of safe conduct to the Seignory. Savonarola willingly obeyed, and he was led away guarded by soldiers. The infuriated mob tried to stone him, but a roof of lances over his head protected him. Bitter jibes and insults of every sort were levelled at him. And Savonarola, had he been capable of a selfish feeling, must have felt how little worthy these wretches were of the sacrifices he had made in their behalf.

The rejoicings were great in Rome on hearing of these doings in Florence. The Pope wrote expressing his thanks to the Seignory for having captured and imprisoned that "godless son of perdition," who had troubled the Church so long, and requested them to deliver him alive into his hands. They, however, seem to have thought it a point of honour to keep Savonarola in their own custody, but declared themselves willing to deal with him as the Pope might desire. What the tender mercies of Alexander VI. would be may be easily guessed. A mock trial took place. We will pass over the revolting details of the torture, to which, day after day, Savonarola was subjected: merely remarking that, as his biographer has justly said, to a man like Savonarola, of an ardent imagination, a sanguine temperament, with the irritability of extraordinary genius, of a singularly sensitive frame, his nerves violently excitable, and health extremely delicate, the torture must have been more than commonly terrible. His fortitude was, however, equal to the occasion; and, in spite of his excruciating sufferings, he would recant nothing, but bore witness to the Truth in spite of all. The end was that he was condemned to be burnt.

The last scene of all took place on the 22nd of May, 1498. On the Piazza are prepared the stakes and faggots which are to form the funeral piles of Savonarola and the two brother monks who are to suffer with him. The eager crowd are gathered, ready to witness, with fiendish joy, the death-agony of him who has so often spoken in words of love to them, and who would fain have instilled into their souls some of his own noble spirit. And yet blame them not; a people whom the priest has fettered in the bonds of superstition are hardly to be looked upon as responsible for their acts, and we say, with the noble-souled Savonarola, "Alas, poor souls, they know not what they do!" But some were there whose hearts sickened at the thought that so base a deed as was that day done before the face of High Heaven should still be possible in that Florence for which, and amongst the people for whom, their master had done so much, and worked so long. Savonarola mounted the ladder, the pile is fired, high mount the flames. But, at this moment, a violent wind drove the flames so strongly on one side that they would not touch his body. The superstitious multitude are seized with panic-fear at this strange incident, and many hasten away. The flames mount higher and stronger, and, ere long, all that remains of Savonarola is a heap of ashes. His ashes were afterwards thrown from the old bridge of Florence into the river Arno.

"A dead man causes no war," such was the answer given by Savonarola's

judges to one amongst them who would fain have saved him. A greater mistake than this was never made, but the Church who did to death Savonarola, and so many other noble souls in those ages of spiritual terrorism, saw it not. Such as Savonarola never become dead men. The witnesses for the Truth, and more especially those who have sealed their testimony with their blood, live ever. Wycliffe lived again in Huss, Huss in Savonarola, and Savonarola in Luther. "At Naumberg," so stands the record, "on his way to the Diet of Worms, Luther made the acquaintance of a certain zealous priest, who carefully and reverentially preserved in his closet the portrait of Savonarola, though more as a martyr to liberty and morality than as a religious confessor. The good priest, however, perceived enough resemblance between the Italian and the German to draw the attention of the latter to his sacred memento. Silently producing the cherished painting, he held it awhile before the eyes of Luther, who as silently perused it; but, nothing daunted, conceived rather courage than fear from the lesson it presented." It was in consequence of this event that the great German Reformer obtained, and carefully studied, the works of Savonarola, some of which he afterwards translated and published in German. There was a great difference between the men, but they were both workers in the same great cause of storming the citadel of error and superstition; both valiant soldiers of God, ready to fight to the death in defence of the truth as they saw it.

Is has often been that men—good men, too—have hesitated to do anything towards destroying the evils of their time—have hesitated even to speak out fairly their hatred of injustice, or to join those who have been willing to make the attempt to do somewhat in the direction of Reform, because they have thought to themselves, 'these things, this evil, this injustice, are too strong to be destroyed in our time, and what is the use of beginning a work we can never finish? To do so would be to bring odium on ourselves and create enemies, without serving any purpose.' We make no doubt that such is the feeling of many who hesitate to join our ranks as Religious Reformers. But the past history of the progress of humanity is fertile in proofs of the folly of such a thought. The true Reformer, the man who works in the cause of truth and righteousness, never dies. The work he has begun will as certainly be carried to its completion as if he himself had completed it; and so Savonarola dead, was living still. His blood spake from the ground. His ashes became living men; and the Church found that a dead man may cause war after all.

There is, however, another consideration connected with the career of Savonarola worthy of our attention; this, namely, that Superstition is incompatible with Liberty. The Spirit of Liberty spoke aloud in this man, and the superstition of the people crushed it. The superstitious man is essentially a slave. And it is on this account that the Churches have ever been so ready, and still remain so desirous, to foster and keep alive the spirit of superstition in the people. Destroy this, and priestcraft is destroyed. Destroy this, and man is spiritually and intellectually free. And, depend upon it, until the freedom of the individual is achieved, true citizen-liberty is impossible for the majority of the nations. Looking through history we find that kingcraft and priestcraft have ever been in close alliance. Even here in England, it was not until men began to lose their faith in the Churches that Political Reform became possible. And until the remaining superstitions which are preached from our pulpits are rooted out, perfect liberty for all classes will be impossible. The Churches have ever been drag-chains on the wheels of

progress, and still remain so. Who but the Churches and their supporters have stood in the way of a national education? Who but the parsons, and those who believe in them, have libelled God by attributing to Him cholera and other epidemics, and preached the uselessness—nay, wickedness—of sanitary reform? It is, however, quite unnecessary to adduce further examples of a truth which is patent to all unprejudiced minds.

The conclusion to be arrived at from the premises afforded by the facts of the present and the past in relation to this matter is this, that true religion is the sole guarantee of real liberty. By true religion we mean something quite different from any of the 'isms prevalent amongst us. We mean by it that perfect love to God and man which will lead men to seek to perform their duty, and act in accordance with the Divine Will in every relation of life, and which, recognising in each man one of God's children, will respect the rights and liberties of all. It is the absence of this which has led to the oppressions and the tyrannies so prevalent amongst men. It is its presence which affords a guarantee against evil and injustice. And when man the statesman and man the citizen become truly religious in this sense, then will the spirit of true liberty govern our legislation, and find scope and verge in all our institutions. Religion and Liberty are thus seen to have an intimate connection. A real religious Reformation will find an outcome in the State no less than in every other department of human thought and action, and citizen rights and liberties will be the better recognised and more surely possessed, as men become more truly and wisely religious.

JAS. L. GOODING.

STREET TEACHERS.

As the power and prosperity of a nation depend on the development of the intellectual and moral capabilities of its people, it evidently becomes the duty of every one of its members to exert his abilities in promoting the development of the latent powers he perceives around him, in order that *all* may be able the more effectively to contribute to the welfare of *all*. Now, without any desire to magnify the evil, it will, we think, be readily admitted, that ignorance and immorality still prevail among us to a deplorable extent, notwithstanding the great reformation already effected, and despite the efforts still making in all directions for their removal.

Of the extent of ignorance prevailing, most of us must be conscious, when we reflect, that there are tens of thousands of our industrious population—of those whose labours in field, factory, and workshop, constitute our source of wealth and power—who have their mental and moral capabilities still unfolded. That vast numbers of them are still ignorant of the beautiful world they inhabit, and of the numerous objects and existences they are constantly using, or are daily surrounded by. That they know nothing of the little world of wonders within themselves, of the great laws of the universe to which they are subject, nor of the social or political institutions under which they live.

That vice, immorality, and crime still abound among us to a fearful extent, our daily and weekly records afford abundant evidence; apart from the knowledge forced upon us by the large means we are annually called upon to contribute for their repression or punishment; evils that doubtlessly owe their origin to one source, *the defective teaching and training of our population*.

Now, apart from the religious question, which, in proclaiming "all men equal in the sight of God," should evidently aim at unfolding the mental and moral powers He has conferred on them, the better to be enabled to com-

prehend His works and laws, there is still the great social question to be considered, of how far the general enlightenment *of all* would promote *the well-being of all*? How far it would help to increase their productive powers? would tend to economise the wealth raised, and thus increase the means by which labour is set in motion? would help to procure a larger amount of the means of comfort and happiness for all our people? would help to diminish our national expenditure? remove our class dissensions, and call forth a greater amount of intellect, energy, and power, to uphold all that is valuable in our social and political institutions?

Doubtless much is being done at present to enlighten and improve our people, through the instrumentality of our schools, mechanic's institutes, literary and scientific societies, libraries and reading rooms, combined with the advantages of our newspaper press, cheap periodicals, and cheap interesting and improving works of various kinds; yet still it becomes an important question to inquire whether any additional means can be devised for enlightening and improving them?

And this brings me to the object of my address; which is to endeavour to arrest the attention and engage the influence of the thoughtful and earnest portion of society, on behalf of those who do not share in the advantages of any of those institutions or means of improvement. For the education of vast numbers of them has been altogether neglected, or has been of so defective a character that the veriest rudiments are now forgotten by them, and the desire for all self-improvement blunted. They consequently spend their leisure hours at street corners, at the avenues of public-houses, beer-houses, and gin-palaces, in which places their scanty means are too often wasted, or else they wander listlessly through streets and lanes without a motive, kill their time in the sunshine, or are actively engaged in brawling squabbles, or in acts of mischief or folly.

And yet we see a disposition in these people for acquiring knowledge of some description. They readily congregate to listen to the song of the ballad-singer, to the street version of the last accident or the last murder, to the street quack with his wonderful nostrums, as well as to see and hear everything new, strange, or wonderful, exhibited in our streets.

Cannot advantage be taken of this disposition, and a knowledge of something more useful and improving be laid before them? We have our *Street Preachers* taking advantage of this disposition, and why not our *Street Teachers*? And by these I mean a set of earnest, well-informed, men, with an aptitude for simplifying and imparting knowledge, and a desire to give such oral instruction to our street population as would enlighten and improve them.

Think you that a Teacher, with some aptitude for imparting knowledge, could not interest (even an ignorant audience) by giving them some notion of the earth they inhabit? some idea of its physical features; of the plants, animals, and curiosities, found upon its surface; and of the various tribes that inhabit it? Might they not be made to understand the nature of the atmosphere that surrounds them, the great and important purposes it fulfils, and the wonderful phenomena it exhibits? Would not the structure and growth of plants be an important lesson? and might not their nature and use be so described as to be made interesting? Think you that a popular description of some of our manufactures, or an account of some of our mines and minerals, would not be appreciated even by a street audience? Might not important lessons, also, be given regarding the revered and honoured dead who have blessed our country by their labours and inventions, by their

sufferings and their sacrifices, and by their high and noble thoughts? Nor would it, I think, be difficult to make such persons understand something of their own structure and bodily functions, or to comprehend some of the great laws they must obey for securing healthful existence; more especially those that regard food and cleanliness, and the ventilation and drainage of their dwellings. Nor should the lessons of social and political life be neglected. Pains should be taken to make clear to them the means and virtues requisite for raising wealth in abundance. To give them correct notions of capital—the great fund on which they subsist while they are labouring to produce additional wealth—to show them how it is accumulated, and the means they themselves possess to increase it. To show them the great laws regarding wages, profits, and interchange; and, in short, to give them clear ideas on all that relates to the well-being of society, social and political.

In thus indicating what might be taught to a great portion of our labouring population throughout the country, in their leisure hours, with the view of making them wiser, better, and more useful, members of the community, it may, perhaps, be thought that I have fixed the standard too high for the Teacher, as few persons would be qualified to teach all the subjects I have referred to. Let me, however, clearly state that, in thus giving a brief outline of some of the things which I conceive should be taught, I believe that the principle of the division of labour should be adopted by the Teachers, as some would be better qualified to teach one thing and some another; although some, doubtlessly, would be competent to teach many things, especially as they would have much time for preparation, their labours commencing only when others have ceased from toiling. Believing, however, that great good might be effected if the subject were taken up with zeal and earnestness, I have thus submitted it for public consideration.

W. LOVETT.

NEWMAN STREET FREE CHURCH SUNDAY LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, P.R. D.

JESUS KEEPING THE LAST PASSOVER.

(Concluded from p. 284.)

LUKE's account of the matter is: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, "strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with "thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock "shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."* Then comes the remarkable notice about the two swords, which is closed up by the words—"And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of "Olives; and his disciples also followed him."† John is equally clear upon this point, for he relates the circumstance as occurring immediately after Judas had left the room, but before the delivery of the long speeches.‡ It will be urged by those who admit the contradiction, that it is unimportant in presence of the fact that all four mention the predicted denial. And if this be granted, will it not follow that God did not direct the authors of the narrative?

The incident of washing the disciples' feet, so touchingly related by John, is not noticed by the other Evangelists, which is strange, to say the least of it. But, according to that writer, Jesus even washed the feet of Judas. He says, Jesus "riseth "from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. "After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, "and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to

† Luke xxii. 21-34.

* Ibid. 28-30.

‡ John xiii. 36-38.

"Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."* So that all of them were washed, even Judas, and they were told to do the same for each other. But to what good end it is hard to discover. According to the various narratives, they were a set of coarse, dull, unfeeling men, who were unable to appreciate this act of condescension, and utterly incapable of comprehending the meaning of doing it to one another. One writer says: "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."† Is this a correct representation? Did they actually quarrel among themselves, and after the institution of the loving supper? If so, then how can we believe them to have been capable of understanding either the meaning of the washing or the meal, and its Eucharistic close? Some writers have supposed that it was because of this quarrel that Jesus washed their feet, thereby intending to teach them their equality, and that the best should serve; but as others—and they being equally orthodox—are of a different opinion, we cannot treat the suggestion as of the nature of a proof. Beside, the narrative in Luke is quite the reverse of that in John. In the latter, humility is made to be the great feature, but in the former the disciples are promised princely power. They were not serve each other, but to sit upon thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. If we believe this promise to have been given, we cannot credit the other of the feet-washing; not, at least, as occurring in connection with the dispute about presidency.

And while treating upon this strange notice in Luke, it is impossible to overlook the remarkable passage which follows shortly after in relation to the swords. Jesus is reported as saying, "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, and he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough."‡ Obviously this was a charge to procure swords, for which, indeed, the disciples were to sell even their garments; but shortly afterwards, when the weapons were brought into use, the order was given to replace it in its sheath, because they who draw the sword shall perish by it. How can the two be harmonised? Why was a sword to be purchased if it were a sin to use it? Was Jesus likely to order a purchase which was so utterly useless?

There are numerous discrepancies of a similar nature, such as the contradictions about the time and manner in which Jesus indicated the betrayer; about the second taking of bread; about the kind and length of discourses delivered, and especially in regard to the spirit of enthusiasm in which Jesus is reported by John to have addressed his followers. But it is enough to indicate without developing them; he who runs may read for himself, and nothing more is needed. The contradictions are evident unto all who compare the varying narratives; and having seen them, the reader is forced to the conclusion that the authors could not have done more than report the traditions of their time. As history, there is no congruity in them, so we are constrained to reject them as unworthy of our confidence.

But although compelled to reject the narratives of this last supper in the light

* John xiii. 4-8.

† Luke xxii. 24-30.

‡ Luke, xxii. 36-38.

of perfect and historical narratives, I feel justified in concluding that there is a substantial truth lying at their base. There are errors in detail, such as generally arise when a remarkable event has occurred which has afterward to be written of by various persons; and although such errors are fatal to the popular theory relative to the Inspiration of these narratives, they do not detract from the conclusion that such an event really occurred. The incidents may be wrongly placed, and many of the sentences found in John's Gospel were not uttered by Jesus, but still we have the fact, that a loving supper was eaten, and that during the evening Jesus spake noble words unto those who were around the table. The narrators have added many ornamental touches of their own, none of which, however, are of the true Nazarene stamp, especially many of those which occur in John; but when we look into the narratives, it is impossible to miss seeing that a noble truth lies beneath the mountains of mere words, which love and tenderness had piled up.

Whether he said unto them that they were to do likewise in remembrance of him, I shall not undertake to determine, but this much is certain, that to do so is good, when men can act in the same spirit in reverencing the pure and holy. There is nothing better for us than to keep the noble and good in our memory. They who have done great things for us, who have discovered truths, uprooted errors, or done anything whereby we have received advantage, not only deserve to be kept in remembrance, but are of such importance that, without their being so, their descendants are not likely to become great. The true wealth of a nation lies in the number and greatness of its heroes. Wealth may be dug out of the Californian mountains, but that which gives it a real value, genius and noble thought, is not so easily reached. He that inspires humanity with a new hope, or enriches it with new ideas, does more for its progress towards freedom and happiness than they do who bequeath millions of golden crowns. In the olden times good-hearted men founded monasteries, and left their wealth to be employed in building and endowing alms-houses, but had a man left enough to cover a thousand acres with such buildings, I should not deem him to be equal as a benefactor to either of the men who discovered oxygen, electricity, or how to make a locomotive engine. The former were good at heart, but that is not enough to raise a nation. Strength comes to a nation, not in virtue of its alms-houses, but through the means set agoing whereby humanity is enabled to do without alms! And they who do this are to be held in perpetual esteem. The Stephensons and Daltons, the Farradays and Priestleys, the Harveys and Jenners—all those, in any form, who have done some portion of the work whereby we have been set free from the thralldom of Nature or Superstition, are our real benefactors, whom we cannot forget without being guilty of ingratitude. Let us have our meetings in remembrance of them, for it was as Saviours they wrought for us; let us gather together and do honour to their memories, for unto them we are deeply indebted, both for our mental and physical progress. Neglect them, treat them either with coldness or contempt, and a proof will be furnished to the world of our having been weighed in the balances and found wanting. In honouring them we strengthen ourselves. So, too, in honouring Jesus, for no man can intelligently conceive his career without being both spiritually and morally improved. But the honour, like the goodness, must be of a comprehensible nature. We hail and reverence him as a lofty spirit that dwelt awhile among men; that loved and taught them; that, at length, died in the cause of religious liberty; and in doing this we are promoting in our own souls the growth of that feeling which makes us live honourably and usefully among our fellow-men.

But can it be said that Christian men and women in modern days are diligent in keeping alive the memory of Jesus—that they are honouring him by observing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper? Mockery is always unhealthy, but never more so than when the subject mocked is pure and noble. I can forgive a man for parodying some petty ballad, but not when he deals with the dying words and actions of some high-souled man. And yet what else are they doing who profess that the modern "Communion" is an imitation of Jesus and his disciples? Is the minister the representative of Jesus? Are they who kneel before the rails the

imitators of the disciples? I have witnessed strange scenes in churches when believers had met to communicate. I have seen the lords and squires of the neighbourhood go first up to the rails, where they knelt down and took of the bread and wine, after which the poorer residents and Christian brethren were permitted to do likewise, but the latter dare not approach the rails until the former had all been served. This is a common practice in country places, and yet the leaders speak of the common brotherhood. In some places a sort of composition is made: the rich kneel in front and the poor kneel before the side rails, but by no chance, when such is the order of proceeding, may the poor venture to kneel in front. In London there are millions who communicate; but with what hearts and minds, with what emotions and passions! Let us enter one of the fashionable churches upon a communion day, and estimate the amount of charity and Christian brotherhood there present. Behold that bevy of beauties who are so closely scanning the attire of their neighbours, and whose eyes look so languishingly upon the handsome preacher. They are about to kneel and communicate in remembrance of Jesus; but what do they know or think of him? To what extent are their hearts moved by his self-sacrifice and love? Would they be there if it were unfashionable to kneel at the altar? Would they move up to the rails if mockery and scorn were their portion? Are they in love with Jesus more than with their favourite spaniels or their "darling bonnets"? Young and light-hearted they are, quite as much or even more sinned against than sinning they are; but make all the concessions which charity dictates, and still the residue will be hypocrisy, mockery, and delusion. Look at that fine woman, who moves with such queenly pride along the aisle, followed by her liveried page, bearing her gilt and costly-bound books, and sinking into her soft seat with all the negligence and luxuriousness of an Eastern beauty; she is about to communicate. How did she speak this morning of the poor sempstress, who toiled far into the night in order to prepare that splendid dress in which she has come up to visit God? How did she treat her tirewoman, her footman, and others, before leaving home? And now that she is seated there in all the pride of wealth and power, what does she think of the poor ones who are perched upon the hard seats in the distant and draughty gallery? Does she truly love them? Could she go and sit down as with a sister beside poor old ugly Hetty, who has had such a terrible battle of life to fight before numbering the seventy years of which she boasts as being "over and gone," leaving her so much nearer to the grave and rest? Is it not true that although "in the name of Jesus" she is about to communicate, she is full of egotism, vanity, and arrogance? And that man there, who walks with erect head towards the table, was it not yesterday that he refused to overlook the error of the orphaned errand boy; that he stopped one shilling upon some miserable pretence out of the wages of Brown, who has a large family and a sick wife; or that he refused to grant another day to the unfortunate debtor, whose misfortunes had come thick and fast upon him? In the name of Jesus, and without a blush he kneels upon the luxurious bench to take the bit of bread and to sip the cup of wine, but in whose name was it that he prosecuted the poor beggar woman for publicly asking alms, or used the portion of the widow in order to brick out his assembly rooms and to shed an air of grandeur over his abode?

Is the life of Jesus uppermost in the mind of more than one in ten of those who are kneeling before those rails? And he who so hurriedly moves round to administer the elements, is he there because of his love to Jesus, or because it is part of the duty belonging to his "sacred" office, for the purchase of which he paid many hundreds of pounds to a clerical agent? Pomp, pride, arrogance, and greediness, are assembled in the name of Jesus to obey the law of society, but will that constitute a true communion? The gulf between that scene and the scene in Jerusalem is far too wide for any apology to bridge over. It is a mockery of Jesus to say that they are there in remembrance of him. The American slave-holder keeps up his fourth of July, and boasts of his love for the principles of freedom, but when we visit the huts of his negroes they tell a totally different story; and it is quite as ungenerous toward Jesus to say that modern Christians taking the sacrament are imitating him, as to urge that the modern Legrees are imitating Washington.

Conformity has taken the place of religion in the Churches of the nineteenth century. The talk about being good is taken as amply sufficient to compensate for the entire absence of manlike virtues. He who goes regularly to the Lord's Table enjoys a sort of Roman Catholic license, and may venture upon doing deeds which would prove the ruin of his Freethinking brethren. It is utterly useless to hoodwink ourselves upon this point, for we all know how small is the measure of good done compared with the promises of performance. Taking the communion is put in place of charity to "cover a multitude of sins." The man who comes away from the table, having been a partaker, feels that he has performed a very virtuous action, and is no longer like "the wicked unbeliever" who would not bow the knee. But pride of heart destroys more than pride of intellect, and even the orthodox will confess that he who goes up to the table merely because others go there, is far lower as a man than he who, through an error in thought, remains away. There is some hope of the man who toils for his own convictions, but none for him who does but parrot the thoughts of others. And of the thousands who communicate, how many do so in virtue of convictions reached through earnestness of thought?

Yet I would not deny that some are in earnest. There are pure souls in England who go up to the table with hearts of tenderness and thoughts of holy love and charity. Many a man and woman may be seen who tremble with excess of joy that they are permitted to break bread in remembrance of the Crucified One. These, when they go up, have no thought about the folds of their dress or the social standing of their kneeling companions, for their hearts and minds being fixed upon the Crucified One they have no attention to bestow upon the mere things and men of every-day life. Wrapt in devotion, carried away in thought to the guest-chamber of Jerusalem, they see and hear all that faith has induced them to believe of the Supper and the final speeches; and, although we may not credit what they do, although we cannot accept the Jerusalem scene as real in any of the forms now related to us, we can honour their respect for the purity and holiness which marked the life of Jesus. If all who communicated were like them, then there would be little cause to complain of formalism or hypocrisy. But, alas! such men are rare, and I would as soon think of sitting to dine at a table with a dozen livid corpses as of kneeling with the majority of those who eat and drink in the name of the Nazarene. Seated in a row beside and around the well-covered table, the dead bodies would not fail to call up such strong feelings of horror and disgust that every mouthful I took would be spat with loathing from my mouth; and the same would follow my kneeling at the table. I should spiritually loathe the hollow-hearted observers of fashionable forms, and when they raised the morsel to their lips my tongue could not be restrained from saying—'Blaspheme not in action the pure and good by pretending to love that which thou dost not even admire, and do not add to your catalogue of sins that gross one of assuming to be united in spirit with Jesus of Nazareth, knowing as thou dost, that thine heart is set upon wealth, rank, and animal gratifications.'

We repudiate the formalities, and yet we also can hold our commemorative supper in honour of Jesus, either by gathering our friends together, so that we may sit down to converse upon the important topics that interest us as immortal beings—giving and receiving light from each other, or by calling in the halt and the blind to dispense comforts unto them, such as they would not otherwise receive. When a few earnest souls gather together around a table to speak of the higher realms, and to utter the hopes of their hearts in relation to the future, it is impossible for them to escape receiving the blessing of increased conviction and knowledge. They come nearer unto God exactly in proportion to the energy with which they deal truthfully with each other. Thought generates thought, and when ten earnest men have assembled together to honour the dead, and to seek for light, they will not be left unblest or in darkness. So, too, in calling in the halt and the blind. He who would imitate Jesus will not meet merely to taste bread and wine, but will find those in need, and supply their wants.

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THE "NOBLE EARL" AND THE ESSAYS AND REVIEWS.

NOTWITHSTANDING his numerous failures, the Earl of Shaftesbury has been upon his legs again. He is incorrigible. Not content with rendering himself ridiculous in the House of Lords by declining, when challenged to do so, to repeat the false charges he preferred against the Education Commissioners, when playing the character of Bounce in his special Tabernacle, Exeter Hall—he is now storming it in the country, having recently made his appearance in the character of Furious Bottom, a Special Pleader, in the play "How to Raise Funds for the British and Foreign Bible Society." This play was produced in "Wesley Chapel," West Bromwich, before a crowded and delighted audience, and it is exceedingly doubtful if any former play in the same place can be named which elicited such an unbounded course of applause. It must have been particularly grateful to the "Noble Earl's" feelings to find himself in a place where stars are uncommon, and where a live lord is as rare as a live golden eagle, surrounded by people who are quite as ready as himself to denounce every idea, opinion, and fact, which they do not understand, and to treat all mankind as devils except the little few who are content with mediocrity in the pulpit and intolerance upon the platform. But, however pleasing the applause may have been to the "Noble Earl," we earnestly advise him to remember that even the plaudits of fools may bring a man into disgrace. He who rises to deliver a Greek oration to an asylum full of pauper idiots must not be astonished at finding himself numbered with the company; and if the Earl hears himself spoken of as rash, ignorant, insolent, and ungentlemanly, let him search for the cause into the speech delivered at West Bromwich.

His Lordship undertook to discourse upon the "Essays and Reviews;" but of course before doing so he must have felt secure there was no one in the meeting who knew the truth sufficiently to detect his sophisms, or to unveil his false statements; thus he enjoyed a complete liberty of misrepresentation, which, operating like healing balm, must have been grateful to his recently-lacerated feelings. There, at least, he could reign supreme, and, doubtless, he believes with Milton's Devil, that it is better to reign in the glowing coal and iron districts than to serve and be snubbed in the realms of light. Being a Saint, he is somewhat remarkable for his love of darkness.

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES, VOL. II.

X

From blacking to coals, and from ragged-schools to midnight meetings, constitute his range of subjects. This, however, would be honourable if his speeches were either reasonable, tolerant, or decently truthful. Being so utterly given up to party, nobody expects him to tell the whole truth; yet we are justified in expecting him to keep a respectful distance from open and abandoned lying.

In his speech the "Noble Earl" said, "Those 'Essays and Reviews' had been drawn up and published by learned professors—by men holding high stations in the universities—men who received, he did not hesitate to say, the bread of the Church for the purpose of preaching very different doctrines, and laying down very different principles, from those to be found in that bad book." Did his Lordship never hear of Huss, or Wickcliffe, or Luther, preaching doctrines which were utterly at variance with the teaching of that Church from which they received their bread? And if so, has he not also heard that it matters little from what secondary source a man receives his bread, so long as he speaks what he honestly believes to be the truth of that God who gives all the bread? Charles the Second had something to do with laying the foundations of the Shaftesbury House; but we have never known a single Earl who was honest to the source of so much prosperity, or who held himself bound by the obligation to defend his benefactor. Moreover, as the Church feeds so many fools and knaves, he ought not to grumble that a few bravely-honest men take a few crumbs. Does he begrudge them? Having already provided for the greatest number of clerical cripples and mental imbeciles ever introduced by any one man into the Establishment, he ought to be content, and permit, at least, a few who can read Greek and Hebrew, a few real scholars, to remain within the pale. He need not fear that they will make his special favourites blush for their ignorance. Nothing can do that; neither will the denounced men seek the conversion of those whom he delights to honour; they always fish for trout, not for such long gudgeons. They speak to the heart and the intellect, and there is not one among the "Noble Earl's" greatest enemies who has been bold enough to say that his clerical *protégés* possessed either.

In one portion of his speech he said: "He liked to talk on those subjects, as he wished to drive the truth home to the senses of people, to set them against the doctrines taught in the 'Essays and Reviews,' to show them that the heart was far better than the head in all those spiritual matters that related to eternal love; and to prove to them that in the simplicity of love they would attain a far deeper and truer insight into the things of the Most High than by the most elaborate study of geology and metaphysics. They would know much more by experience than those could possibly know who only knew from study and burning the midnight lamp." That is to say, "feeling is a safer guide than either reason or history." And if the principle be true, this will follow—that we must all become Hindoos; or, if we remain Christians, we must enter the Catholic Church, where only the feelings are appealed to. The Papal emissary asks nothing more than that the feelings shall be permitted to rule. It is through the feelings they have achieved their victories; and if the "Noble Earl" were in possession of such susceptibilities to emotion, he would not long remain as the jackal for the young lions of the Church. We do not, however, desire to insinuate aught against him in that matter, for he is perfectly safe upon that score. His feelings are made to be worn—they are not inwoven with his mortal fabric; for although there are moments when even an expert may be deceived

into believing his emotions to be real, the delusion speedily vanishes, and the Peer of England stands unveiled in all his native hardness of nature.

In another part of his speech he ventured upon the following extraordinary and pictorial mode of arguing the case: "Many of the working men of England in the agricultural and mechanical districts had very little time to devote to the study of history and science, but they might have—and many of them had—heard of the triumphs that had been achieved by the Bible at all times, how it had changed barbarism into civilisation; made the savage become mild and gentle, and raised woman from the condition of servitude to that of equality with man; how it had raised us from the appalling subjection to which we were bound heart and mind to the Papacy; how it had introduced the great Reformation and given us freedom of body, of thought, and of expression; and how it had given us power to walk as Christians and free men."

Where has it "changed barbarism into civilization"? In what land? Is it in New Zealand, where the people are being killed much faster than they can be civilised and shriven? Is it in Africa upon the slave coast?—in America, among the Red Indians? Oh! where has this vaunted miracle been wrought? What savage has it made mild and gentle? And even if the Bible reader has become such, are there none who have done the same without reading the Bible? Are not the Hindoos mild and gentle? Where has it raised the condition of woman to an equality with that of man?—surely not in England, or the laws are foully belied, for it is only recently that she has been placed on a level with the beast—she may not now be beaten without the protection of the law. How did it raise us from Papal subjection? When did it give "freedom of body"? "SLAVES obey your MASTER," is the New Testament injunction, which arms the slave-dealer and gives him "scriptural authority" for his calling. When did it give "freedom of thought"? Was there no such freedom in Ancient Greece, India, or Egypt? Does it ever exist in any Christian land—that is, *minus* tar and feathers, or social ostracism? Or "freedom of expression"—when did it secure that? And if it be secured why did the "Noble Earl" repudiate the claim of the Essayists and Reviewers to utter their thoughts freely?

The following is a choice morsel: "When the working man had seen, by the simple operation of God's truth upon the heart, a bad and drunken husband become a model of conjugal fidelity and kindness; when he had seen a reprobate son and daughter brought to support their father and mother: and when he had seen a bad father and mother caused by its working to become kind and good parents—when he had seen these great changes wrought by its effects, would he hesitate to receive it as being sent down from heaven and inspired by God, because some learned professor, sitting in his chair, said he had some doubt as to whether the world was created in six days or in six generations, or that because ichthyosaurs had been found in the chalk, fishes could not have been created on the sixth day. Those great practical experiences, those great triumphs, the Scriptures had effected; and when science should have produced upon the minds of a millionth part of the human race a millionth part of the good that was done by the Bible every hour in England alone, then, and then only, could science come into competition even with the very fringes of the revealed Word of God." Did the "Noble Earl" never hear of the teetotal doctrine leading men to abandon drunkenness, and to make their homes very comfortable? Does that fact prove it to have come from heaven? The Chinese

sons and daughters, taught by the books of Confucius, are most exemplary in the conduct towards their parents. Their filial piety surpasses that of any other race; but does that prove the books to have been given by God? The play of "George Barnwell" has converted many from thieving. Gambling has been cured by "The Gamester," and men who had resolved to commit a murder have been reclaimed by "Hamlet" and "Macbeth"—shall we say the cure proves the dramas to be the work of God? And if there are some good things in a book, must it follow that learned professors are wrong who say that geology, the known word of God, contradicts Genesis, which some men suppose to be the word of God? If the Noble Earl would condescend to join a "logic class" in one of the mechanic's institutes, the sharp boys, after taking the shine out of his speeches, would teach him to discriminate with more clearness and precision between cause, effect, and primal origin. One year given to such study would be of infinite value to him, and would preserve him from falling into such stupid errors. And as to "science," we earnestly advise him to read even a small book upon its conquests. He is evidently ignorant of the fact that science, besides bringing about cheap Bible printing, has cured the plague, and achieved a thousand victories by means of which our progress out of savagery into semi-civilisation has been secured. He who speaks so contemptuously of science reminds us of the poor Red Indian, trying to strangle the surgeon who was endeavouring to tie up the wounded artery through which the red savage was bleeding to death. We can pity the savage, but we have a right to expect a superior knowledge of facts in a "Noble Earl."

The climax of absurdity was achieved in the following passage:—"How were the tens and hundreds of thousands of working men in this country to get time to learn Greek and Hebrew and natural science, without which they were given to understand by the Essayists that they were not qualified to give an opinion as to the meaning of the Bible? Why, it would be a greater sacerdotal tyranny than had ever been exercised even by the Church of Rome, to say that none but those living in learned leisure could be able to comprehend in what degree the book should be received, and when received, in what degree its tenets were to be believed."

Now, we beg to ask, does this great actor mean to say that a man is competent to speak of a translation with greater certainty than of the original? The present Dean of Canterbury told the young men in Exeter Hall the truth when he said that "without a knowledge of Greek they could not properly understand the New Testament." He has edited an edition which differs from all its predecessors, as all their editions do from each other. But if there cannot be a certainty about the original, how is it to be gained about a translation? But the "Noble Earl" has said it; down among the men of coal and iron he has said it. We are not sure that he himself believes it, but we don't believe it. Nay, we are sure that if he were called upon to speak among scholars he would no more dare to repeat that sophism than he dared to repeat his Exeter Hall speech in the House of Lords. He is said to be a clever actor who can "vamp" so as to meet the tastes of his audience, and in vamping the "Noble Earl" stands unrivalled. He, too, will play out his part, but in some other sphere. His darkness will be enlightened; for, as sure as night follows the day, a time must come when the soul of Astley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, will be demonstrated to be plebeian and not noble, to be that of a windbag and no real man.

P. W. P.

JOSEPH BARKER AND THE SECULARISTS.

DOUBTLESS, our readers are aware, that the "Secularists," as a body of Free-thinkers, are threatened by the spirit of division; it being highly probable that before long one portion of them will be known by another name. Occasionally we have been informed of its being our duty to take a side in the dispute, and, because of our silence, not merely a few persons, but many, have concluded that we took no interest in the matter. Such was not really the case; but, independently of the fact that other matters occupied our attention, we had no desire to rush into a fray when advice was not likely to be taken, and if, at this late hour, we venture upon making a few observations, it is merely to the end that the gist of the matter may be placed fairly before the subscribers to this Journal.

At the present moment, the two giants of the ultra-freethought platform are Mr. Chas. Bradlaugh and Mr. Joseph Barker. The former is comparatively a young man, but remarkable alike for the intensity of the hatred he bears to the Bible, and the earnestness with which he hunts down those of its defenders with whom he is publicly brought into contact. From him they are neither to expect mercy nor even justice. Probably he has been a formal believer—one of those Bible Christians who said, "Yes, it is true," merely because they heard others saying so, but when he had entered through the portals of Doubt into the world of Absolute Denial, he vaulted at the conclusion that all who hold his former faith do so upon the same terms and foundations that himself held it. Had he ever thoroughly believed he would now be more just in his judgments. Whether, as years grow upon him, and his experience widens, he will do them more justice we shall not here undertake to pronounce; but they deserve it. Moreover, until ample justice be done unto the very weakest, the blindest, and even the most stubborn among them, they will not be healed of their orthodox malady. When the man of Freethought fights his battles upon the territory of his enemy—when he fights modern theology with Biblical weapons, and fights in the spirit of one who wishes only to save that which is noble, he partially disarms his opponent before a blow is struck, and completely so when it is shown that it is the advantage of his foe, not a mere selfish victory, which constitutes the true end and aim of his reasoning. So far as honesty of purpose, combined with courage, perseverance, and energy are concerned, we consider Mr. Bradlaugh to be worthy of the praise of men, but, unfortunately, he has not sufficiently mastered the questions he undertakes to discuss—he is unconscious of the difficulties which beset the better-read and deeper thinker, and hence came the unfortunate mistakes, the unfair condemnations, and self-contradictions into which, in debates, he has so frequently fallen.

Mr. Barker is a man of another stamp; he is mature as a thinker, logical as a debater, earnest, persevering, dauntless, powerful in argument, and filled with that better and thoroughly practical sort of wisdom which every intellectual man possesses, who has fought his way through the various sloughs of religious creedism which swallow up and destroy so many generous men. If he debates with a bigoted Methodist, not only does he foresee every argument to be used by his antagonist, but he can do him justice, because in all honesty he once occupied his opponent's position; and so it is with the various degrees of Orthodoxy and Freethought, for having gradually passed through them all, he fully appreciates the various difficulties which impede the progress of the believer. There is not in England a man who

is more competent to debate, upon a public platform, the Biblical and theological questions of the age than he is. And, in doing him that justice, we cannot omit the sincere expression of our regret that he does not belong to the school of Theists. Probably he is nearer to it than he imagines; certainly, far nearer than he is to that of Atheism. But whether he joins the former or not, it is certain that he will do considerably more than his part toward destroying the Bibliolatry of the nineteenth century. And, now that he stands alone, his power will be far greater than it was when he was working in the traces with others.

The immediate cause of his standing alone is very easily stated. Some time back a book was published, in which occurred what purports to be a complete physiological discussion of the sexual question, "Is it better to marry than burn?" or, shall we say that marriage is a great curse which all are to shun? The author is stated to be a physiologist. If that be true, then his book is a mockery—written in a mad frolic; but, having carefully read every page, and it was a painful infliction, we are sure such scientific attainments cannot be predicated of the writer. Frequently he sets forth propositions as established truths, which no physiologist can read without being convulsed with laughter, unless his sorrow and indignation happen to conquer the risible tendency. His theory of observing the laws of nature is based upon the assumption that we are first to call Passion to our aid to show us what those laws really are. He does not in so many words say so, yet, practically, he enforces that it is from the self-indulgent man he would learn the true end of life, and the proper course of human conduct; but they who know anything of the power of habit will tell another tale. Self-restraint is the source of strength. Indulge to day, and self-control is weaker on the morrow. He who would conquer the world must begin with conquering himself. He who has the fewest wants is in the best position to dare the hatred of men, while he who indulges, physically, soon becomes so thoroughly a slave that his intellect bows before the dictates of passion, and his birth-right is given for the means of indulgence.

This book was noticed and praised by Mr. Bradlaugh in those columns of the *National Reformer* which were edited by himself, but, in charity we hope, without his having fully comprehended its purport. Naturally, many who knew its real nature were alarmed at this, for it is unusual with Freethinkers to countenance gross immorality. With his usual tact, Mr. Holyoake had previously declined to promote its circulation, and, naturally, Mr. Barker reasonably felt himself compromised by the favourable notice having appeared in a paper of which he was joint-editor. He has obtained, even among the orthodox, a good moral reputation, which, were it only out of respect for his family, he dared not imperil; and, very properly, he protested against both the book and the review. This protest led to a deal of bickering in the Secularist ranks, finally, to his rupture with the "National Reformer" party, and the establishment of a new weekly Journal, called, "Barker's Review," in which, with great clearness, he now defines his own cause, and promulgates his particular opinions. We wish him success in his undertaking, and cannot doubt that the best-hearted, the purest-minded, and the most intellectual members of the Secular party will render him all the support which is in their power.

But why are not all the Secularists with him? He stood upon a moral platform to protest against immorality—why, then, should he have been opposed? Does Secularism wed itself with vice, and the abominable doctrines

of the book in question? For if not, how could there have been a division? The answer to these questions is very simple. In the ranks of Secularism there are three parties, two of which are fundamentally opposed to each other. The first is composed of men who make unceasing war upon the entire circle of theological systems, as taught in the several schools. As a body, they repudiate Inspiration and its cognates, but uphold Morality with all its bonds and issues. As a rule, they are good, earnest, honourable men, alike incapable of lauding vice as they are of bowing the knee when the heart refuses its adoration. We have spent many pleasant hours with members of this party—hours which will always be looked back upon with satisfaction, for, both in heart and intellect, they with whom we spent them were desirable companions. Such men shrink from the book in question as from a moral pest; to them there is pollution even in its touch, and were all England polled none of its people would be found more earnest than these in repudiating its immoral and physically injurious lessons. These men are all on the side of Mr. Barker.

The opposite class to these is composed of low-browed, coarse, uneducated, and sensual men; beings who live to eat and drink, and find enjoyment in the lowest haunts of pollution. We pity but cannot love them, nor is it possible to spend a peaceful hour in their society. Their tastes are as low as their brows, and if they do not fight cocks or draw badgers, it is not that their tastes are improved, but that the law is too strong against them. Prompted to their unbelief by a kind of brute instinct, they are most violent in their denunciations of the Bible and Priestcraft, not because of having risen above them, but because of their incapacity to understand the nature of what they curse. As Reformers we do not speak of them, nor do we expect them to render any assistance, for it would be as absurd as if we were to call upon the Red Indians to reform the Astronomical Calendars. They are Secularists in name, and they are members of the Society, but their patronage damages the Secularist cause in the esteem of all reasonable and respectable men, and drives away all those of purer tastes and higher morals, whose presence and influence would operate in its favour. These men are all with Mr. Bradlaugh, although in spirit and in moral life he is not with them.

Between these two classes there is yet a third, composed of those who are prepared to tolerate all deficiencies in those who belong to the Society. They are neither given to vice nor desirous of having it advocated, but they are so wedded to Secularism, that they slavishly tolerate movements which their consciences cannot approve; and so ardent in their hatred of modern religious theories that they cannot pardon the man who publicly questions the propriety of any Secularist's conduct. They are nervously alive to every breath of dissent, and Mr. Barker, because of his boldness and honesty, has incurred their displeasure. Had the book been denounced at first by Mr. Bradlaugh, they would have been delighted; had it been written by an orthodox man, and favourably reviewed in a Christian journal, they would have been intoxicated with delight with Mr. Barker's exposure of its foulness. That which made his words a sin unto them, was the fact that a Secularist denounced his brother. But, fortunately for his own reputation and influence, Joseph Barker is not subject to the fears which overwhelm and fill them with terror, lest a word spoken in earnest against a brother-worker should destroy a great principle; neither is he in fear lest a truth should destroy freedom. Having a wider experience to fall back upon, he knows that the only way in which any measure of reform can be securely gained, is that of dealing equally

with all who violate the moral laws. We accept the boldness with which he met the difficulty, as furnishing another proof of his moral integrity and fitness to stand forth before the world to represent the feelings and desires of intelligent Secularists. And although his road diverges from ours, we cordially wish him success in his new undertaking. For many years he has battled bravely in the world of Freethought, and now that old age is coming on we trust he will receive that support to which his talents, energy, and moral purpose so justly entitle him.

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XLV.

"EVANGELICAL" THEORIES AND PARODIES OF HISTORY.

THE Philosophy of History, as it is written out in the works of those writers who are accepted as Oracles on this subject by our Churches and Chapels, becomes a gross libel on the Omniscience, the Power, and Goodness of the Deity. In order to support certain foregone conclusions necessitated by their acceptance of the popular theological teaching, with reference to the character and acts of God, these men assume things, and lay down principles, the only logical inference from which is, that the Creator in His Moral Government of the Universe has been guilty of immense injustice towards His creature man, and has committed mistake after mistake in His dealings with him. The entire Jewish History, and the so-called Mosaic history of Creation and the Patriarchal Ages, are a continued series of mistakes committed by an All-Wise and All-Powerful God, as expounded from the orthodox point of view. The story of the Fall, for instance, assumes either that God could not or would not prevent it. If He could not, then His Power is called in question; if He would not, His Goodness is denied. What greater libel on His Omniscience can be conceived than the theologian's account of the Deluge? Or, if His Omniscience must be conserved, then, again, His Goodness suffers. Either He knew, or did not know, that the world would relapse into sin; if He knew not, what becomes of His Omniscience? if He knew, where is the Goodness of a Being who uselessly drowned a whole world? Then, again, we are told by these writers, that the hand of God is seen in the entire of history, and so all the misery, all the evils and injustice, caused by the acts of men are saddled on the Deity.

Those who are curious to see the "evangelical" argument, as applied to history, variously worked out, may consult Miller's "Philosophy of History," Reed's "Hand of God in History," and D'Aubigne's "History of the Reformation," with various other works of a similar class. By these writers the whole of history is said to be subsidiary to the one great aim of redeeming humanity from the effects of the Fall. The coming of Christ and teaching of Christianity are represented in the works of these men as constituting the first Act in the great Drama; but no attempt is made to show how the Justice of God can be consistent with delaying the means of salvation for men until so late a period of the world's history, or how a Good God could have left so many millions of men in ignorance of their only chance of redemption. Reed traces "the footsteps of Providence in the extension and "establishment of the Church." Thus, all the bloodshed and anarchy, all the persecution and human misery, with the records whereof the pages of Church History are full, must be attributed to God. The Papacy and the Inquisition, the Crusades and the wholesale murder of Waldenses, Albigenes,

and others, the Despotism and Terrorism, the Fanaticism and Superstition, which mark the history of the "extension and establishment of the Church," are all to be attributed to the Providence of a Wise, Good, and All-Powerful Being. In short, if any one should desire to become acquainted with the worst libels on the character of God which have ever been perpetrated, it is to the pages of "Evangelical historians" and orthodox expositors of history that he must go. But if he desire to have the light of knowledge and of truth let in upon the past, if he wish to find the means of forming an estimate of God's moral government, or a fair judgment of human endeavour, let him turn elsewhere, for these he will not find there.

The false assumptions which lie at the basis of the false philosophy of these writers are:—first, that God is the sole actor in history; second, that He acts by special interferences, and not by general laws. We, as Religious Reformers, hold the converse to be true.

God is not the sole actor in history. To say otherwise is to deny human free agency, to destroy human responsibility. If man be not a free agent, he cannot be responsible for his deeds. The Being who would seek to make him so must be devoid of any sense of Justice. These are things we, at least, cannot predicate either of God or man. We believe man is responsible and God is Just. God has left man free, and as a free agent we find him acting an independent part in history. The misery and evil we find there are not attributable to God, but to man, arising from his ignorance of, or disobedience to, those perfect laws impressed by the Creator on His Creation, obedience whereto insures progress and happiness for humanity. But, say some, Why did not God in His Goodness make man acquainted with these laws, or prevent him disobeying? The answer is a simple one,—to do so would have been to interfere with man's freedom. If God had undertaken to enlighten man in the first instance, man must for ever have been a baby in the lap of Omnipotence; all the strength which has come from working out his own progress would have been lost to him. If God had stood between man and disobedience man could not be free. By others the question is asked, Where the need of entailing evil and misery as a consequence of disobedience? In reply we inquire, How otherwise would man—being a free agent—have learnt to obey?

God acts by general laws and not by special interferences, we say, and this whether in the moral or the physical universe. In history, as a whole, we see the work of God, because we see there the outcome of those laws which God, as the Moral Governor of the Universe, requires man to obey in order that he may progress. God does not undertake to civilize mankind, but leaves man to do that for himself by obeying His laws. If they be obeyed progress results; if they be neglected, the nation which neglects them decays and perishes, to make room for another which will obey. The results of the disobedience thus serve as beacon-lights and warnings to the after-humanity, and out of ruin and misery comes a teaching which leads to ultimate progress. It is true we see God in History, but we see man there too. God points out the way, and leaves man to follow or not as he pleases. Thus God's perfect Wisdom and Goodness, and man's free agency, and consequent responsibility, are seen to be compatible the one with the other. Yes! history is the progressive evolution of God's perfect law—that law which ever brings out of the good of To-day the better of To-morrow, and even out of evil itself brings good results—that law which, as the ages roll, leads man out of the darkness of ignorance into the marvellous light of God's perfect Truth. Look where

we will into the social, intellectual, or whatever other sphere of thought and action, we find this law at work.

It is part of the false philosophy of which we have been speaking, that Christianity has been the great civilizing agency in the modern world. It is first assumed that Christianity was imported by God into human history at a specific period, contrary (as we have seen) to all our ideas of Justice; and then it is falsely represented that from Christianity has flowed all that blesses and dignifies man. Following this false view, D'Aubigné has written a history of the Reformation, upon what are called "evangelical principles," in which he treats the Reformation as a revival of Christianity, and both as the special work of God; he fails, however, to show why, if Christianity were the work of God, it needed reviving. His words are: "Christianity and the Reformation are the same revolution, effected at different times, and under different circumstances. They vary in secondary features, but are identical in their primary and principal lineaments. The one is a repetition of the other. The one ended the old, the other began the new world; the Middle Ages lie between."* Yes! the Middle Ages, with all their anarchy, vice, misery, wretchedness, ignorance and superstition, lie between, that is, they come after Christianity came into the world. Those who talk of Christianity being God's means of civilizing the nations should explain how this is, how it was that what civilization was in the world at the time of its appearance disappeared, and men, in spite of Christianity, drifted into a state of ignorance and barbarism unparalleled in the history of the world. In saying this we mean no disparagement of Christianity; for, in truth, ere Christianity could bear its proper fruits it died out, and Priestcraft usurped its place. True Christianity has never yet found general acceptance, or had a fair trial among men. Christ, in common with many other great religious souls, taught truths which have never yet become part of the practical religion of men, and which Protestantism (which is the practical outcome of the Reformation of the 16th Century) ignores no less than Roman Catholicism. A New Reformation is needed, which shall take up those and other truths since discovered, and give to men a nobler religion than either Catholicism or Protestantism. This Reformation is the work of this Age, of which it will be the outcome; for the higher civilisation of To-day demands a nobler Religion than any hitherto taught.

Our principle in dealing with the Reformation is the very reverse of that of D'Aubigné. We look upon the Reformation, not as the work of God, but as the work of man. If it be treated as the work of God, we have to ask the same questions as are suggested with reference to Christianity. We have to ask, How was it that the work of the All-Wise was imperfect? How was it that He delayed so necessary a work to the 16th Century? and others which will easily suggest themselves to the minds of thoughtful readers, none of which receive any satisfactory answer at the hands of these "evangelical" historians. Moreover, as the work of God, the Reformation loses all its significance, and all its value. The work of an Infinite Being can afford no example and no teaching to His finite creature. As the work of man, however, we know no period of history so full of instruction, both in the shape of guidance and of warning. But the matter does not rest on mere inferences drawn from the character of the Deity; the proof that the Reformation was man's work is found in the whole course of its history.

We suppose even D'Aubigné would not tell us that God invented

* Hist. Reform., *Preface*, p. 2.

Printing, or assisted Mahomet II. in besieging Constantinople, or taught men Greek, and yet all these will be seen to have been important aids in working out the Reformation. The object of the articles which follow this, will be to show the part which these and other events had in bringing about the Revival of Learning and Literature in Europe, and how far the way was thereby prepared for Luther and the other Reformers of the 16th Century. D'Aubigné himself is compelled to acknowledge that Literature was an auxiliary which lent its efficient aid to the Reformation, and that the "natural tendency of "the human mind to expand, to investigate and acquire knowledge" (he should have added, when not under the thralldom of the priest,) "gave birth "to this new power."* To make his theory of the Reformation being the sole work of God consistent with the facts of history, and with his own admissions, he should, therefore, have said that it was begun by man and finished by God. Although—as all who carefully study the history of the movement itself cannot fail to see—it was a movement altogether so imperfect, so marred by human prejudice and passion, so inconsistent with its own principles, that it is simply to libel God to represent it as His work. Of course, we shall be understood in these remarks, as merely meaning that God does not specially interfere in history; and not as denying, that which all history goes to prove, that God's great laws lie behind every historic movement as much as they do behind the action and development of the forces of Nature. It resting with man, in both cases, to discover, obey, and make the best use of them.

JAS. L. GOODING.

PHYSIC AND PHYSICIANS IN CHINA.

MEDICINE in China is in an extremely low and degraded state; there are no medical schools; anatomy is unknown, and the whole science of medicine, even amongst the regular practitioners, consists in an obscure theory respecting the two principles, Yin and Yang. The fees of physicians are ridiculously small.

Du Halde has published translations of two medical works from the Chinese: one on the Pulse, by Wang-shoo-ho, who flourished under the Tsin dynasty, prior to the Christian era; the other, a Pun-tsaou, or Medical Herbal, containing the remedies usually prescribed. The former version is by F. Hervieu. Du Halde has given the following account of the theory of Chinese medicine:—

The Chinese recognise two natural principles of life—vital heat and radical moisture, of which the animal spirits and the blood are the vehicles. They give the name of Yang to the vital heat, and that of Yin to the radical moisture. These two principles of life, they say, are found in all the chief parts of the body, the limbs and the intestines, their combination being the source of life and vigour. They divide the body into right and left, each having an eye, an arm, a hand, a shoulder, a leg, and a foot. Another division is into three parts—upper, middle, and lower; they likewise divide it into members and intestines. The six principal organs, wherein reside the radical moisture, are the heart, liver, and one of the reins on the left; and the lungs, spleen, and other rein, on the right. The intestines, which are six in number, are the seat of the vital heat. The radical moisture and vital heat pass from their respective seats into the other parts of the body by

* See Hist. Ref., chap. vii.

means of the spirits and blood : whence it would appear that the Chinese were acquainted imperfectly with the theory of the circulation of the blood from the earliest date of their medical science, probably about 4,500 years ago. They suppose that the human frame, by means of the nerves, muscles, veins, and arteries, is, as it were, a kind of lute, or instrument of harmony, the several parts of which render certain sounds, or rather have a certain species of temperament peculiar to them, by reason of their shape, situation, and use, and that it is by means of the different pulses, which communicate the various sounds and tones of the instruments, that an accurate judgment can be formed respecting their condition : just as a cord, in greater or less tension, touched at one place or another, gently or forcibly, gives out different notes.

Having established these twelve sources of life in the human body, they sought external indications of their internal state, and found them in the head, the seat of all the senses connected with animal operations ; the tongue, which is in communication with the heart ; the nostrils with the lungs, the mouth with the spleen, the ears with the reins, and the eyes with the liver ; and they profess to draw from the colour of the face, eyes, nostrils, and ears, the sound of the voice and the taste imparted to the tongue, certain conclusions respecting the temperament of the body, and the life or death of a patient.

In accordance with this theory of the human system, external matter is supposed to act upon it. This external matter consists of the five elements—earth, metals, water, air, and fire. The human body, they say, was composed of these five elements, and in such a manner that there are parts of it in which one element predominates. Thus, fire rules the heart and first intestines, air the liver and gall-bladder, water the reins, metals the lungs and great intestines, earth the spleen and stomach, &c.

The pulse, as already remarked, is supposed to indicate infallibly all the dispositions of the different parts of the body. The principles are the following :—It is motion, they say, which causes the pulse, and this motion is created by the flux and reflux of the blood and animal spirits, which are conveyed to all parts of the body by twelve channels, and the perfect knowledge of the pulsations discovers the state of the system—the nature of the blood and spirits, their deficiency and excess, which the skilful physician's office is to regulate and restore to their just temperament.

When a physician is called in to a patient, he places the latter's arm upon a pillow, and applies his fingers along the artery, sometimes gently and sometimes forcibly ; he considers the action of the pulse for a very considerable time, noticing the slightest difference with great attention ; and often, without interrogating the patient, tells him in what part of his body he feels pain, that organ is affected, and when he will recover.

So far Du Halde, whose account we have much abridged. Its accuracy, on some points at least, is ascertained by a curious report made by F. Amiot, who was himself a patient of a Chinese physician, in a letter from Peking, dated 26th June, 1789.

"A serious illness," observes M. Amiot, "of the character which the Chinese call Shang-han, and which indicated its presence by causing me the most acute pains, compelled me to have recourse to a native physician. I described my case to him, telling him that I had for two days experienced such sharp pains under the left breast, that I could not eat, drink, or sleep, and had lost the free exercise of all the animal functions. He felt my

"pulse on both arms for a long time, and told me that the seat of my disorder was the liver, and that it arose from an excess of the Yang, the effects of which would extend to the whole frame, if not prevented, by tempering it by the Yin. He added that, as soon as I should have taken two draughts, which he would prescribe for me, my pains would entirely cease, and I should be able to sleep. The result was just as he had predicted: the pains ceased, and I slept part of the night. He then made me take certain gentle medicines for three or four days, after which he ordered one more powerful, to procure a crisis, which was to remove the principal cause of the disease, and put me in the way of getting well. The crisis came on as he had foretold, and the disorder continued to diminish day after day."

M. Amiot interrogated the physician respecting the principles of his art, and the replies of the Chinese doctor seem to imply a practical skill in diagnostics which is, perhaps, worthy of more attentive investigation.

Amongst the irregular practitioners in China, some very strange and disgusting articles are added to the simples which compose the Chinese *Materia Medica*. It is believed that various parts of the human body are efficacious in medicine; and, in particular, that the gall of a man increases courage—whence this article is in great request amongst those who are deficient in spirit. The manner in which it is taken is to steep 100 or 200 grains of rice in a human gall-bladder, and when dry, to eat ten or twenty grains a-day. Executioners make considerable profit by administering to this depraved vulgar error.

THE JEWISH RACE.

BY J. H. BRIDGES.



THEY have been exiles, and not only exiles, but wanderers. They have been tied to no common soil, and yet they have kept their language and faith. They have been patriots without a patria. Some have compared the gipseys, who have been wanderers now for five centuries,—some have thought that mediæval Greece, deluged with invasion many times a century, sustained as hard a trial. But the difference between these cases and the case of the Jews is considerable, though it is a difference of degree merely, and not of kind. It is to be explained, however, far more adequately by the social and historical influences just now indicated, than by an appeal to the external forces of soil and climate. That spirit of isolation which was at first forced upon them from without as a religious duty, at last spontaneously evolved itself as the most salient mark of the national character. If we were to rank races according to their sympathetic power, their capacity for assimilation of inferior types, or for acceptance of what is superior, the Jew would stand, perhaps, lowest on the scale. The Roman could conquer, and could assimilate what he conquered; the Gaul and Goth could recognise their superior, and be proud of the Roman name and tongue. But the Jew could neither spread civilisation nor receive it. Yet that very incapacity gave him strength. Proud he was; not like the Greek—vain; but his pride was not that of the Roman sitting on the world's throne; nor was it the pride of intellect, nor yet the fiery-tempered honour of the feudal cavalier. It was a profoundly egotistic and sectarian feeling. A Volscian war breathed civil peace within the walls of Rome; but the factions of Eleazar, John, and Simon, raged as fierce as ever when the siege-towers of Titus had shattered their inmost wall. Their history, from Moses downwards, tells of stiff-necked rebellion, of fatal incapacity for obedience. Theirs was a granitic temperament fetched from volcanic depths; and it issued from the hottest fire of persecution more intractable and adamant than before.

Of the exclusive favour of Jehovah the Jew never doubted. The facts of history were interpreted into concord with Judaism. The Roman nation was traceable, by direct descent, to Esau. Ishmael was, of course, the synonyme for Mahomet; and Christendom is rarely called by any other name than Edom. It was for their sins, and for their ultimate salvation, that these old enemies were still permitted to plague them; and, though the temple were destroyed, and the elaborate series of sacrifices neglected, yet that, they would say, had been the case in the Babylonish captivity. He, to whom a thousand years were as one day, would pardon the inevitable default, whether for seventy years or seven thousand. Yet, twice in the year, two feasts of less cumbrous ceremonies have been always held. The feast of Purim still fosters national hopes; the solemn day of the Atonement still calls back their national relationship to Jehovah.

We must not altogether pass by their intellectual exertions during the Middle Ages. They rivalled the schoolmen in metaphysics: they surpassed all but the Arabs in science. Without believing that twelve thousand students filled the Jewish schools at Toledo, it seems highly probable that the Jews of that city, in the thirteenth century, could boast of more astronomers than were to be found in the rest of Europe; and the astronomical tables which they compiled for Alfonso prove that these studies were not mere astrological daydreams. Medicine was their other favourite pursuit. The Jews of Spain and Provence supplied physicians to all the European courts, and to not a few of the Popes.

Without entering into a discussion of their metaphysical writings, it is enough to point out their two distinct lines of thought. There was a system of orthodox scholastic theology. There was a system of pantheism that veiled itself under theological terms. The first was introduced into Spain in the tenth century, from the great Oriental school of Pumbeditha; it culminated into Maimonides, who lived in the latter half of the twelfth century. The second was the Cabbala, a system of theosophic pantheism, which, from its influence over the hermetics and mystics of the sixteenth century, must not be passed unnoticed. Pico de Mirandola, Reuchlin, Postel, More, John Baptist Helmont, were Cabbalistic students. Of the vast mass of Cabbalistic writings, two books, the Zophar and the Ietzirah, are the kernel; and these books are believed by Franck, the most recent and the most critical writer on the subject, to have been compiled about the Christian era, from the writings of a school that, in the days of the Captivity, had drawn its inspirations from the Zend Avesta. Certain it is that, under the modest guise of a commentary on the Pentateuch, and veiled often by monstrous allegories, is to be found a spiritualistic system singularly like that attributed to Zoroaster. That God, as an all-pervading Spirit, is the prime and only true Substance; that of the eternal activity of such a spirit, the whole scale of being is the emanation; that matter is a lower form of mind; that evil is a lower form of good; that matter and evil are connected, as the lowest step, the shadow, the "outer husk or rind" (cortex) of existence;—such was the Cabbalistic solution, not widely different, perhaps, from that of modern pantheists, of the hopeless problems of creation and of moral evil.

But, after all, if we would find the full outpouring of their inner spiritual life, during these times of sorrow, we must seek for it in the psalmody of their synagogues. It was not till many centuries after the fall of Jerusalem that poetry or music entered into their services. A long extempore prayer, with a few ejaculatory responses, was the simple liturgy. Gradually these prayers fell into parts and proportions unconsciously established; at last sound asserted her sway, and rhymed hymns are found as early as the eighth century. The interweaving of Bible verses was of course an essential ingredient in these hymns, chanted often extempore by the leader of the service. At the close of the stanza, the expectant ear of the assembly was half-surprised, half-charmed, by some passage of warning or promise given to their fathers 2000 years ago; and the strong full key-note summed and blended into the one varying emotions of the verse—pity and exultation, devotion and sullen hate.

These poems are full of sublime pictures of outward nature which recal, and that not by mere plagiarism, Isaiah, Job, and David. No Christian poet could ever

realise, as the Jew realised, the beauty and the terror of nature to be the visible manifestation of the power of God:—

“To Him sing the lips of all creatures.
From above and from beneath has His glory sounded.
The earth cries, There is none but Thee;
And the heavens, That Thou alone art Holy!
Majesty issues from the deep, and harmony from the stars:
The day sends forth speech, and the night singing;
The fire declares His name; The woods utter melody;
The wild beasts tell of the exceeding greatness of God.”

These poems are full also of what so strongly marks Jewish poetry from the poetry of other ancient nations—of the personal experiences, struggles, and aspirations of the soul.

Of more public and stirring themes there was no want. If the few simple tales of his heroic houses were enough for the Athenian dramatist, the Hebrew poet dealt with a tale of more absorbing interest—with the ever-present facts of his own national destiny. Poetry for the Jews was no spectacle, no amusement of the fancy, no splendid structure of the imagination;—it was the simple outburst of national hope and passion. The compass of their tones ranged from transcendental reverence to fiendish hate. They sang of the certain doom of the oppressor; and it lightened the miseries of time to know that their revenge would be co-equal with eternity. They sang of aged teachers of the law, who had sealed a holy life and saved it from the “defiling waters” by a self-offered sacrifice. They sang of mothers who had slain their children—of children, “young rose-blossoms chosen by the Lord from His garden,” who had prayed for death lest they should be tempted to betray their faith; and this time they sang joyfully, for every life thus shed stored up forgiveness for themselves and vengeance for their foes. They sang the sublime unity of their God, and the wonders that He had done for them; for they knew themselves the centre of the universe, the one spot in God’s lost creation where He had designed to set His foot: children in a strange unholy land, for whom their father feared the poisonous air of friendship and prosperity; driven hither and thither, but floating in the sole ark of God on the gloomy sea of the Dark Ages.

Thus the Jews lived in Europe. Amidst the young nations revelling in life and strength, clothed in a religion that satisfied their high imperfect cravings, intruded this worn, aged, stranger, telling of an older creed. The parent, returning to life and to his hearth, found himself forgotten and his place filled,—

“He crawled in a beam, like a pale lost dream,
That the noonday glare is shaming.”

The swift fierce tide of progress sweeping by him—the falling empire, the barbarian kingdoms, the efflorescence of chivalry, the uprisings of cities and cathedrals, the babbling of the schoolmen, the hydra-headed growth of heresy—were all hateful unrealities to him—were as the confused voices of the night, as the bewilderments of a dreary pageant. He had seen the birth of the European nations. He had stood by when Paris and London were built. The Catholic Church grew and crumbled, and Huss and Luther sounded the trumpet of its doom, and the Jew changed not. The Eternal Wanderer trod from city to city, from century to century, with the mark of Cain upon his brow, with a life that could not be touched, and with no hope of death.

Yet not without hope of national reconstruction. So their own prophets sung; and such, I believe, is the conclusion to be drawn from the analogies of history. It has been said that Christian nations never die; that material power may pass away from them: that subjection to a foreign sword or civil discord, or the decay of faith and loosening of law, with all the other ills that nations are heirs to, may overwhelm them with a spiritual torpor that shall make their history a blank for centuries; and yet they shall rise again. England was not robbed of her Saxon character by the Conquest; France, in the fifteenth century, with her numbers halved by pestilence, lacerated by English and Burgundian wars, rose up to

found her grand monarchy; Germany survived the massacres of the thirty years. Such historical facts have been applied to judgments of the future. There are few who doubt that Italy is destined soon to be rid of foreign domination, and to resume her place among the nations; nor does her corrupt government, her decayed faith, and an utter suspension of activity that has lasted for two centuries, preclude Spain from the same sure hopes.

But this attribute of permanence is not to be restricted to Christian nations. The old Roman stock, for instance, has never perished. Italian antiquaries will show us village festivals, agricultural tenures, municipal customs, that were old in Cicero's time. The language of ancient Italy still lives, if not in its literary form, yet in what is of far higher significance—in its proper dialect. Dante looked upon Virgil as a fellow-citizen. And the more carefully the documents of mediæval Italy are studied, the clearer does the continuity become between the republics of Lombardy and the colonies and the municipalities of the empire.

The war of Grecian independence proclaims the same truth. Classical purism had made us forget that Greek, since Homer, has always been a spoken language: that the catena of authors is unbroken from the first Olympiad to the present day: and that all the vice and many of the virtues characteristic of the old Hellenic race grow still on the Hellenic soil. All really great nations seem endowed with this privilege of immortality. Having once borne an important part in the historical evolution of society, they cannot decompose, like African or American tribes, into mere subsoil for succeeding races. It is not merely that they hand down to posterity the products of their mental and material toil, their cultivated fields, their alphabet and their poetry—this nations of inferior worth can do; but they visibly maintain their places before posterity, degraded, it may be, but not deprived of birthright, and holding still the germ of reconstruction. No better example of this truth is to be found than the existence of the Jewish race since the fall of Jerusalem. For it is not an exception, as some have thought, to the general laws which govern humanity; rather it is a well-developed case of their fulfilment. We are apt to strain the comparison between men and nations, and to take for granted that as the one so the other must have their appointed periods of decay and death. But perhaps this view would be altogether modified by a truer analysis of the social forces which act upon and which constitute a nation. These co-operating influences are of two kinds. There is, first, the co-operation of the actions and interests of all the living beings who at any given moment compose that nation; binding man to man, family to family, and co-ordinating private and selfish efforts to one social purpose. This *contract social*, whether instinctive or voluntary, has been thought sufficient to explain the whole. But it is obvious that, in this case, any external shock, any intestine war, by shattering this union for a moment, would shatter it for ever. The molecules would have no more reason for reuniting in the same combination, than for agglutinating themselves to any other existing society. We must search further than contemporary associations for the cause of national consistency. There is another kind of co-operation—that of the present with all the past generations to whom is due, not life only, and the arts and luxuries of life, but opinion, character, faith, and law. Each century is the product of the combined past centuries. The formative influence of the past upon each generation that follows is a force which is as actual and real as the force of gravitation; it follows that, as time grows older, it augments with accelerating ratio. It is from considerations like these that we may hope partly to understand the gradual formation and the marvellous stability of national character. But great men, great actions, a social and personal life founded and bound together by deep religious feeling, those alone form the hereditary mould, that family likeness, that congenital cast of disposition, which grows strong with time, and withstands the assaults of oppression, of exile, and of moral degradation.

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A WORD ON MODERN CIVILIZATION.

POPE expressed a truth, supported by human experience in all ages, when he said, "Man never is but always to be blest." Men are ever ready to find fault with the present moment. Dissatisfaction with the present is, in fact, a feeling so widespread that we may almost call it universal. Nor are we among those who would condemn this feeling, being, as it is when healthily developed, one of the sources of progress. If, for instance, it be asked, What is the distinction between the character of the Saxon and that of the Celt?—what explains the difference between the fate of each? the answer will be found in this, that the Saxon is a discontented man: give him all he asks, and a little more, he is still dissatisfied; he is ever looking to better his lot; he lives not in the present but in the future, while the Celt—make him but tolerably comfortable, and he sits down content; he is the man of the present, he knows no future; even to evils he is in a great degree resigned, whereas the Saxon strives against them, even if he be done to death in the strife. This feeling of dissatisfaction with the present has, however, another side to it, not noticed by Pope, and that is the tendency which we find in men to look back regretfully, or in a spirit of slavish admiration, believing that they discern somewhat in the past nobler and greater than this present has to show or is capable of. There is a noble truth underlying that old Hebrew legend of Lot's wife, applicable to the case of all who do this; Lot's wife looked back regretfully when she should have looked forward hopefully, and in so doing forfeited her humanity, and became from that day useless to the world. So is it with all who do likewise. Because so many do this, we have thought a word on this matter necessary.

It is good to look back into that past, if we look in order that we may learn its lessons, take its warnings, and practically apply these to making the present nobler and better than the past was; but it is not good if we look believing that there was aught there greater and nobler than there might be in these days, believing that all of human virtue and worth was exhausted by Greeks and Romans, or others. To do so is practically to enslave ourselves, and, moreover, it is to ignore that great law of Progress which runs through History no less than Nature. Say what they may who seem to read History backward, the Civilization which Europe is working out for herself is a nobler

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES, VOL. II.

Y

one than any antiquity could boast. Whatever Greeks and Romans possessed of blessing and wisdom was the heritage and possession of the few; the majority of mankind were enslaved, denied the rights, almost the name of men. In modern times the blessings of civilization are the common possession of all men; the people have become a distinct class in the social system, and the helots and serfs who represented the people in ancient days exist no longer amongst us. In this alone we discern the marks of an untold progress. But perhaps there is nothing which shows the superiority of modern over ancient civilization so clearly as the growth of a positive and practical philosophy by the spread of scientific truth.

One of the great boons conferred by science upon man, is that it enables him to put a bridle, as it were, in the mouth of Nature, and control the forces beneath which his ancestors, in a former age, bowed with abject submission; he stands master and freeman where they were slaves. Thus it is that we, in this nineteenth century, are enabled to put to a practical use those things, those forces, before which men in a former stood awed and fearful. And why was it that they were thus affected? Because they comprehended not, could not explain, the various strange phenomena passing around them, their ignorance led them to clothe all things with mystery; out of mystery came superstitious terror and unreasonable-fear. Not until men are able to destroy this mystery, and thus get rid of the superstition, is it possible for them to make a practical use of what lies around them. We have an illustration of this truth no less in the facts of history than in the experiences of our own lives. How weak and faltering are the steps, how uncertain the movements, of the strongest, wisest, and bravest of us, when under cover of the night we find ourselves in some strange unknown place; vague and uncertain ideas of possible danger come to us, faint and dim notions of something to fear, and yet we know not what, possess us, a moral and mental palsy shakes us, and for the time being we become incapable of doing aught. All of us have known somewhat of the vague terrors which beset the minds of men under such, or similar circumstances. And it was a feeling of a similar kind which possessed the minds of men in the old time, when they listened to the booming thunder, or saw the flashing lightning; they saw in them only something to be afraid of; and it was not until, by the aid of science, their true character was divulged, that man could chain the electrical force and put it to a practical use in the electric telegraph and in other ways. Whatsoever, therefore, it may be which tends to surround anything with mystery, to the extent to which it succeeds in doing this, it succeeds also in rendering that thing of no practical value to men, prevents them from educating the lessons it may contain, and binds them to false notions of its true character. We have, therefore, a guarantee of progress wanting to antiquity.

Beyond this, however, science has conferred a great moral boon upon man, for by destroying so much of mystery and consequent superstition, it has taught him self-reliance. And it is ever to be borne in mind that progress and greatness, whether in the individual or the nation, depend upon the possession and exercise of the quality of self-reliance. Whether on the broad arena of history, in the growth of a people, or in the narrower sphere of a single life, it is found that self-reliance alone enables man to conquer difficulties, and hold his own against opposing influences. Without it, man remains dependent upon others, those upon whom, in his ignorance and weakness, he learns to look as superiors, but whose superiority frequently consists only in the possession of greater cunning. Even, how-

ever, in those cases in which this dependence has been placed in real superiors, the loss of that strength of character which is begotten of self-help, the degrading sense of inferiority, the craven looking for help outside himself, the indolence, want of foresight, recklessness and other evils which are the necessary results of a state of dependence, are all operant forces in preventing progress, nay, more, in ensuring degradation, for where no progress is there must be degradation. The man or nation that does not march onward must of necessity go backward. Such is Nature's law. There is no such thing as an *Eternal Now*. Onward or backward—onward to new and higher spheres, or backward into ruin and nothingness; such is the sentence, and there is no escaping it.

JAS. L. GOODING.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XLVI.

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING AND LITERATURE.

THE entire fifteenth century was an era of preparation for the great work of the sixteenth. During this period the human mind freed itself from many of the shackles which the Church had fastened on it, and became, in many respects, enfranchised from its old bondage to priestcraft and superstition. Without the work of the fifteenth century, Luther's work would have been simply impossible. We think it the more necessary to call attention to this because D'Aubigné, in order to support his theory—to which we drew the attention of our readers last week—of the Reformation being the result of a special interference of Divine Power, assumes one of its characteristics to have been a peculiar rapidity of action. "The Church of Rome appears," he says, "under Leo X. in all its power and glory. A monk speaks, and "over the half of Europe this power and glory crumble away. . . . This "rapidity," he adds, "is inexplicable to those who see in this great event "only a *reform*, and regard it simply as an act of criticism, which consisted "in making a choice among doctrines, discarding some, retaining others, "and arranging those retained so as to form them into a new system."* Now as this view, which he says renders the reformation movement inexplicable, is pretty much our view, it becomes our duty to show that it is consistent with facts: D'Aubigné's view, as his entire theory, labours under the great disadvantage that his statements are not facts at all, but simply false assumptions. The power, if not the glory (which latter, by the way, we should have to look long to find), of the Church of Rome had been undermined long before the age of Leo; and instead of the Reformation being a rapid movement it was an exceedingly slow one.

We have already, in tracing out the sources of the Reformation in this series of papers, seen that some of them are found no less than 450 years prior to the time of Luther. We have seen that the Church of Rome was gradually losing its hold on the popular mind from the beginning of the thirteenth century. We have seen its antagonists rising up, both within and without its pale, through more than two centuries. We have seen the "unknown heroes" of the Reformation, and the German mystics, in various ways, preparing the way to the grand result. All who have read those articles are well aware that many had spoken long before Luther, and with effect too. Are we to ignore the work of Wycliffe in the fourteenth, or of Huss and Savonarola in the fifteenth century? Did they leave no trace of their lives? Was their work without effect on the after-time? None but a theorist, blinded by pre-

* Hist. Ref. Preface, pp. 2-3.

judice, and bound to support a system, could, in presence of the facts, arrive at such a conclusion. And now we have to deal with a movement which, while itself the result of causes at work through several preceding centuries, was no less conducive to the success of the Reformation than the other matters we have mentioned; with which, too, the work of Savonarola was intimately connected. Taking all these things into consideration, it must be perceived that the peculiar characteristic of "rapidity of action" attributed to the Reformation by D'Aubigné cannot be predicated of it. It was, in fact, a purely human movement, the necessary result of causes in operation through long centuries before the coming of Luther and his coadjutors.

We have said that the revival of learning and literature in Europe was itself the result of causes at work through several preceding centuries. It is in this relation that Mahomet and Mahometanism become connected with the course of European civilization and with the Reformation. We have, some time since, in reviewing the Church of the Dark Ages, and in seeking for the source of the first dawn of light in Europe, seen how the literature and science of antiquity had been preserved by the Moslems, and with them travelled round into Spain, whence, by means of itinerant scholars from the Moorish schools, the first faint streaks of intellectual light dawned on Europe. The result, as we then saw, was the growth of Scholasticism. A far wider intellectual movement commenced with the Crusades, by which the intelligence and civilization of the East were opened to, and brought into comparison with, the ignorance and barbarism of the West. With the enlargement of their experience, men's ideas naturally expanded, and it was not long before the advantages conferred by the learning and literature of the East on those who possessed them were perceived. The step from this to the attempt to appropriate some of these advantages would, naturally, be a short one. The civilizing influences of commerce, and the international communication caused thereby, were also directly attributable to the Crusades.

In the troubadours, and the romance literature of the thirteenth century, is seen the first evidence of intellectual movement in Europe; while Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, appear in the fourteenth as the first products of a partial restoration of the study of antiquity. But it is at the beginning of the fifteenth century that we note the growth of a general desire on the part of Europe to escape from the intellectual thralldom of the Middle Ages. This came as the result of the intellectual activity engendered by Scholasticism on the one hand, and the expansion of the mind, caused by the influences already suggested, on the other. Besides the intellectual movement produced by the Crusades, and the civilizing influences connected with the commerce produced by them, that commerce itself became a direct and immediate agency in the revival of learning. Italy was the first to benefit in all these respects, and during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, we see growing up there the great cities and commercial republics which were afterwards to play a distinguished part in the restoration of letters. Amongst these Florence stands foremost as the leader in this matter. As the centres of commerce, a constant intercourse between the Italian cities and republics was already established, and will serve to explain how the intellectual movement, begun in Italy, soon communicated itself to the other countries of Europe.

For many ages the family of the Medici had been established, and esteemed as one of the most considerable in the Florentine Republic. In Florence it was that, in the year 1389, was born of this family Cosmo de' Medici, whose name will ever remain illustrious as connected with the revival

of letters in Europe. Old Giovanni de' Medici, the father of Cosmo, died in the year 1428. "I feel," said he, on his deathbed, "that I have lived the time prescribed me, and I die content, leaving my children to a station of honour and respect in their native place." So spoke the old merchant, leaving to his son, Cosmo, the care of the fortunes of his family. The transactions of Cosmo were on so large a scale that to unbounded wealth he added an influence more widely extended than any prince of the time. By unbounded generosity to the lower classes in the Republic, and a constant urbanity and attention to the interests of all, he had gained numerous partisans, through whose means he exercised more influence in the State, and possessed a larger share of power, than any other citizen. His power and influence were ever exercised for the benefit of the Republic, and his conduct almost justifies the encomium of Voltaire, that no other man ever obtained his power by so just a title. It was reserved for his grandson, Lorenzo the Magnificent, to extend the power gained by his predecessors to the ruin of the liberties of Florence.

By the constitution, the affairs of the Republic were to be directed by a council of ten citizens, and a chief executive officer, called the Gonfaloniere or standard-bearer, chosen every two months by the citizens; but such was the power of the Medici, that they gradually assumed to themselves the first offices of the State, and nominated such as they chose to fill the rest. A despotism was thus created, which ended in the total destruction of the liberties of Florence, by Lorenzo, calling forth in opposition to it the patriotic energies of Savonarola. Cosmo, however, whose prudence and moderation paved the way for the successful usurpation of his successors, exercised his power so as to be esteemed the father rather than the ruler of the State. His patriotism was put to the proof when, in 1433, Rinaldo de' Albizi, his enemy, succeeded in carrying the election to the chief magistracy. Cosmo, rather than create disturbance in the city, withdrew from Florence, and only returned on the invitation of the citizens. Such was the man who, at the commencement of the fifteenth century, governed Florence, "without arms and without a title, and whose name and age are almost synonymous with the restoration of learning. His riches were dedicated to the service of mankind; he corresponded at once with Cairo and London, and a cargo of Indian spices and Greek books was often imported in the same vessel."*

In the year 1438 a General Council of the Church met at Florence, in order, if possible, to patch up the long-standing disputes between the Greek and Latin Churches, and heal the grand schism which had disunited them; a matter in itself of no great importance, but in its results claiming notice as having aided in some degree the revival of letters in Europe. Shortly before the meeting of this Council, Cosmo de' Medici had been for the second time invested with the office of Gonfaloniere of Florence. It fell to him, therefore, to receive and entertain the Greek Emperor and Patriarch, and large numbers of the Greek clergy and others, with the Pope and his cardinals, who met in Florence for the purposes of the Council. The disputes between the Churches rested on theological quibbles of a most ridiculous character. As always results in such cases, the debates in the Council ended by both parties being more profoundly convinced of the overpowering weight of their own arguments, and the absurdity of those adduced on the other side. No settlement could be arrived at, and it was ultimately arranged that each party should choose six disputants, eminent for their learning, to carry on the debate. Amongst those chosen by the Greeks was Gemisthus Pletho, a man

* RUSSELL. 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici,' chap. i. Gibbon. "Decline and Fall," chap. lxxi.

of great erudition, well acquainted with the ancient Greek literature, and profoundly versed in the writings of Plato.

Pletho was an anomaly in that age, for while to the West the writings of Plato were entirely unknown, their study was by no means common among the Greeks themselves. Pletho, with the ardour of a discoverer, sought to spread a knowledge of the Platonic philosophy, in which he had found so much truth and beauty. He accordingly took advantage of his stay in Florence to commence a course of lectures in exposition of the doctrines of Plato. Nothing can be imagined as more likely to astonish the Italians, who, in common with the rest of Europe, knew but little of Greek antiquity beyond the logic of Aristotle, which had become moulded into the system of doctrines taught by the Schoolmen, to which the Platonic philosophy was entirely opposed. Cosmo de' Medici was among the auditors of Gemisthus, and so powerful an effect was produced on his mind, that he determined to establish an academy at Florence for the sole purpose of cultivating the new and more elevated species of philosophy which appeared to him to be contained in the works of Plato. This Florentine academy became in after years remarkable as being the first institution in Europe where a course of study was pursued detached from the scholastic method hitherto universally adopted.* In these lectures of Pletho we see the commencement of the revival of the Platonic philosophy, which was to produce a new era in the history of literature, and to become the proximate cause of the intellectual advance of Europe. What its effects were, and its relation to the Reformation movement of the next century, we shall hereafter show; our object now being merely to chronicle this and other historical events, which are to be looked upon as the immediate causes of the new-born intellectual life of Europe.

Meanwhile the day of doom for the Greek Empire was rapidly approaching. The year 1453 witnessed the fall of Constantinople, before the victorious arms of the Turks. Into the details of that terrible siege it is beyond our purpose at the present time to go; suffice it to say that, after a vigorous defence of fifty-three days, directed by Constantine Palæologus—the last and worthiest of the Byzantine Emperors, who deserved a better fate—the last remnant of the ancient Roman Empire was lost to its degenerate possessors, and Constantinople became henceforth the seat of the Ottoman Empire. The Greeks, who, hitherto, jealously respecting the tradition received from the earlier times, so flattering to their national vanity, had regarded the nations of the West as barbarians, were now glad to seek a refuge with them. Cosmo's well-known character as an encourager of learning, as also his desire to promote the study of the Greek literature, evidenced by his establishment of the academy at Florence, led to large numbers of learned Greeks seeking his protection, which he readily afforded. By this means the Platonic philosophy, already introduced by Pletho, found many new exponents and defenders, whose services, too, were greatly needed, from the opposition it encountered from the Schoolmen, who now cast in their lot with the Church and the priestly enemies of progress. Public schools, however, were, in spite of all opposition, ere long instituted for the study of the Greek tongue, and the facility afforded by the influx of learned Greeks for their establishment soon made them general all over Italy. It was now that the labours of Petrarch bore their fruit; but the consideration of these and other matters, of which it is needful to speak in connection with our present subject, must be reserved for a separate article.

JAS. L. GOODING.

* Roscoe. "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici," chap. i.

SIR J. G. WILKINSON'S "MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS."

THE ancient Egyptians, as we have before observed, seem to have employed sculpture and painting not only as a substitute for historical chronicles, but as memorials of their arts and sciences, their religious rites and observances, their institutions and manners, their pursuits and amusements. It is hopeless to suggest more than a probable theory for this; we may conjecture that its object may have been to counteract any spirit of innovation, which is hostile to the temper and manners of all the Asiatic and African families of mankind.

The chapter in the work before us which treats of the agriculture and economical science of the ancient Egyptians is highly curious, and it is astonishing to find how many sources Sir G. Wilkinson has discovered for facts illustrative of this subject. The monuments, indeed, afford examples of all the various field labours, and of some pursuits *in re rusticâ*, which seem peculiar to the Egyptians. Even the mode of treating sick animals is exemplified in a sculpture at Beni Hassan. The subject of Egyptian measures he has investigated with great success; the various products of the land are enumerated, and the systems of ploughing, sowing, manuring, irrigating, reaping, &c., are shown, with the various instruments employed.

The chapters which treat of the deities of the Egyptians commence with an examination of their religious opinions, which are compared with those of the Jews and the Greeks. The classical reader remembers the contempt which is poured upon the superstitions of the Egyptians by Juvenal, himself the votary of a creed no less open to ridicule. But it is well known that the priesthood had a clear and accurate conception of the unity of the Deity, and of the creative power; and Sir G. Wilkinson states only what is the fact when he says that the "allegorical religion of the Egyptians contained many "important truths, treasured up in secret, to prevent their perversion." But we are bound to admit that it seems a rather questionable policy to propagate and encourage irrational and childish superstitions, lest important truths should be perverted. The true solution is to be found in the desire of the priesthood to restrict every species of knowledge to themselves, from a conviction of a truth contained in the well-known aphorism of Bacon, that "knowledge is power." In this, however, they were only like every other priesthood that has gained power among men; all priests fear popular knowledge, and seek to make a mystery of truth. Sir G. Wilkinson's theory of the Egyptian Pantheon is no doubt correct:—

"That the images of the Egyptian deities were not supposed to indicate real beings, who had actually existed on earth, is abundantly evident from the forms under which they were represented; and the very fact of a god being figured with a human body and the head of an ibis, might sufficiently prove the allegorical character of Thoth, or Mercury, the emblem of the communicating medium of the divine intellect, and suggested the impossibility of any other than an imaginary or emblematic existence; in the same manner as the Sphinx, with a lion's body and human head, indicative of physical and intellectual power, under which the kings of Egypt were figured, could only be looked upon as an emblematic representation of the qualities of the monarch. But even this evident and well-known symbol did not escape perversion; and the credulous bestowed upon the Sphinx the character of a real animal.

"It signified little, in the choice of a mere emblem, whether it was autho-

rized by good and plausible reasons ; and if, in process of time, the symbol was looked upon with the same veneration as the deity of whom it was the representative, the cause of this corruption is to be ascribed to the same kind of superstition which, in all times and many religions, has invested a relic with a multiplicity of supposed virtues, and obtained for it as high a veneration as the person to whom it belonged, or of whom it was the type.

"This substitution of an emblem, as an animal, or any other object, for the Deity, was not the only corruption which took place in the religion of the Egyptians : many of the deities themselves were mere emblematic representations of attributes of the one and sole God : for the priests, who were initiated into, and who understood the mysteries of, their religion, believed in one Deity alone ; and, in performing their adorations to any particular member of their Pantheon, addressed themselves directly to the sole Ruler of the Universe, through that particular form.

"Each form (whether called Pthah, Amun, or any other of the figures representing various characters of the Deity) was one of His attributes ; in the same manner as our expressions 'the Creator,' 'the Omniscient,' 'the Almighty,' or any other title, indicate one and the same Being ; and hence arose the distinction between the great gods and those of an inferior grade, which were physical objects, as the sun and moon, or abstract notions of various kinds, as 'valour,' 'strength,' 'intellectual gifts,' and the like, personified under different forms ; and it is evident that no one, who understood the principles on which the groundwork of the Egyptian Pantheon was based, could suppose that the god of valour, of strength, or of intellect, had ever lived on earth ; and we may readily conceive how the Egyptian priests derided the absurd notions of the Greeks, who gave a real existence to abstract ideas, and claimed a lineal descent from 'strength,' or any deified attribute of the Divinity.

"Upon this principle it is probable, that gods were made of the virtues, the senses, and, in short, every abstract idea which had reference to the Deity or man ; and we may therefore expect to find, in this catalogue, intellect, might, wisdom, creative power, the generative and productive principles, thought, will, goodness, mercy, compassion, divine vengeance, prudence, temperance, fortitude, fate, love, hope, charity, joy, time, space, infinity, as well as sleep, harmony, and even divisions of time, as the year, month, day, and hours, and an innumerable host of abstract notions.

"Different people have devised various modes of representing the personages connected with their religion. The Egyptians adopted a distinguishing mark for their gods, by giving them the heads of animals, or a peculiar dress and form, which generally, even without the hieroglyphic legends, sufficed to particularise them ; but they had not arrived at that refinement in sculpture which enabled the Greeks to assign a peculiar face and character to each deity. This was an effort of art to which none but the most consummate masters could attain : and even the Greeks sometimes deviated from these conventional forms ; the Apollo, or the Bacchus of one age, differing from those of another ; and the lion-skin, the dolphin, the crescent, or the eagle, were generally required to identify the figures of a Hercules, a Venus, a Diana, or a Jove. Indeed, in so extensive a Pantheon as that of Egypt, it would be impossible to maintain the peculiarities of features, even if adopted for the principal gods ; and the Christians have found it necessary to distinguish the Apostles and saints by various accompanying devices, as the eagle, the lion, a wheel, or other symbols.

"Though the priests were aware of the nature of their gods, and all those who understood the mysteries of the religion, looked upon the Divinity as a sole and undivided Being, the people, as I have already observed, not admitted to a participation of those important secrets, were left in perfect ignorance respecting the objects they were taught to adore; and every one was not only permitted, but encouraged, to believe in the real sanctity of the idol, and the actual existence of the god whose figure he beheld. The bull, Apis, was by them deemed as sacred and as worthy of actual worship as the divinity of which it was the type; and in like manner were other emblems substituted for the deities they represented. But, however the ignorance of the uninstructed may have misinterpreted the nature of the gods, they did not commit the same gross error as the Greeks, who brought down the character of the creative power, the demiurge who made the world, to the level of a blacksmith; this abstract idea of the Egyptians being to the Greeks the working Vulcan, with the hammer, anvil, and implements of an ordinary forge."

The remaining chapters are devoted to festivals, sacrifices, and funeral rites; upon all these topics much additional information is afforded, and errors of even the Greek and Roman writers, who repeated tales at second and third hand, are satisfactorily detected. Thus the charge of offering human victims to the gods, which is preferred against the Egyptians by Diodorus—who, however, limits the victims to red-haired men, namely foreigners—and repeated by Athenæus and Plutarch, though expressly denied by Herodotus, is refuted by the fact that no reference to such sacrifice appears on any existing monument; unless it be in a symbolic group, on the seal of the priests, signifying that the victim might be slaughtered, which, according to Plutarch, bore the figure of a man on his knees, with his hands tied behind him, and a sword pointed at his throat. Sir G. Wilkinson has given (vol. ii., p. 352) an example of this group, which, he says, he has met with more than once in the hieroglyphics of sculptures relating to the sacrifice of victims, and it certainly does look very like the representation of a bearded foreigner about to be slain.

The funeral rites include all the processes of preserving the dead, and the appearance presented by the mummies upon dissection, which are compared with the accounts given by the Greek historians. The object of the Egyptians in embalming their dead is a matter of doubt.

"The Egyptian notion that the soul, after its series of migrations, returned to the same human body in which it had formerly lived on earth, is in perfect accordance with the passage of the Roman poet above alluded to, and this is confirmed by Theophrastus, who says, 'The Egyptians think that the same soul enters into the body of a man, an ox, a dog, a bird, and a fish, until, having passed through all of them, it returns to that from which it set out.' There is even reason to believe that the Egyptians preserved the body, in order to keep it in a fit state to receive the soul which once inhabited it, after the lapse of a certain number of years; and the various occupations followed by the Egyptians during the lifetime of the deceased, which were represented in the sculptures; as well as his arms, the implements he used, or whatever was most precious to him, which were deposited in the tomb with his coffin, might be intended for his benefit at the time of this reunion, which at the least possible period was fixed at 3,000 years. On the other hand, from the fact of animals being also embalmed (the preservation of whose bodies was not ascribable to any idea connected with the soul), the custom might appear rather owing to a sanitary regulation for the benefit of the

living, or be attributable to a feeling of respect for the death—an affectionate family being anxious to preserve that body, or outward form, by which one they loved had been long known to them.

"We are therefore still in uncertainty respecting the actual intentions of the Egyptians, in thus preserving the body, and ornamenting their sepulchres at so great an expense; nor is there any decided proof that the resurrection of the body was a tenet of their religion. It is, however, highly probable that such was their belief, since no other satisfactory reason can be given for the great care of the body after death. And if many a one, on returning to his tomb, might be expected to feel great disappointment in finding it occupied by another, and execrate in no very measured terms the proprietor who had resold it after his death, the offending party would feel secure against any injury from his displeasure, since his return to earth would occur at a different period. For sufficient time always elapsed between the death of two occupants of the same tomb, the 3,000 years dating from the demise of each, and not from any fixed epoch."

We here close our very imperfect notice of a work from which Sir J. G. Wilkieson is entitled to claim an equal measure of reputation with that awarded to the classical antiquaries Grævius and Gronovius.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE SIKHS.

BY THE LATE CAPTAIN W. MURRAY.

THE accomplishments of reading and writing are uncommon among the Sikhs, and are chiefly confined to the Hindoo and Musselman mootsuddes, or clerks, who acquire a sufficient knowledge of the Persian language to enable them to keep the accounts, and to conduct the epistolary correspondence of the chiefs. The Goormookha, or Punjabee written dialect, is familiar to many Sikhs; but, in general, they express a rooted aversion to the acquisition of the Arabic and Persian languages, resulting chiefly from the ideas instilled, and prejudices imbibed, in early age against everything, however useful and rational, that bears relation to, and is connected with, the religion and education of the Musselmans.

Concerns are transacted by oral testimony, verbal agreements, and promises. The test of right is confined to the memory of the oldest inhabitant of the neighbourhood, and tradition preserves old customs. Falsehood, fraud, and perjury, are the natural concomitants of such a mode of conducting affairs. Money, fear, and favour, can purchase an oath, can determine a village boundary-dispute, and screen a criminal from detection, and the infliction of punishment. In some instances, an accused person will call for the Dibb, or ordeal of innocence, plunge his fingers into boiling oil, bear a heated plough-share on his hands for 50 to 100 yards, challenge his accuser to the trial by water, and, if he escape unhurt, his purity is declared and freely acknowledged.

Witchcraft and spells (Jadoo and Moot) have a powerful influence over the fancies and actions of the chiefs and other inhabitants of the Sikh States. A sudden indisposition, a vomiting of blood, or any unusual ailment, for the nature and cause of which a native cannot very readily account, are generally attributed to the malice and invention of a rival, or to an evil-disposed member of the family. The possession of a waxen or dough effigy, some particoloured threads, and small human bones discovered in the dwelling, or about the person, of a suspected individual, are convincing proofs of guilt.

Good and bad omens, lucky and unlucky days, and particular hours of the day and night for commencing a journey and returning home, are carefully observed by the Sikhs, and by all other classes in the Punjab, whether engaged in the most momentous enterprises, or in the common concerns of life. Prior to the field being taken with an army, a visit of ceremony being paid to a distant friend, or a pilgrimage being made, the Muhoorut, or auspicious moment for departure and return, must be predicted by a pundit, and the pundit, on his part, is guided by the jogme or spirits, which pervade every quarter of the compass. To avert the pernicious consequences likely to ensue from unfavourable prognostics or dreams, charity is recommended, and in general given very freely on such occasions, by natives of rank and wealth. These, and many hundred other absurd prejudices and superstitious notions, are carried into the most solemn affairs of state. It is no uncommon practice of Runjeet Singh, when he contemplates any serious undertaking, to direct two slips of paper to be placed on the Grunth Sohil, or Sacred Volume of the Sikhs. On the one is written his wish, and on the other the reverse. A little boy is then brought in, and told to bring one of the slips, and whichever it may happen to be, his highness is as satisfied as if it were a voice from heaven. A knowledge of these whims and prepossessions is useful and necessary. They obtain under varied shapes and in diversified shades, throughout the Eastern world, warping the opinions, and directing the public and private affairs, of all ranks in society, from the despot to the peasant, from the soldier in the battle-field to the criminal at the tree of execution. It must be a pleasing duty to every public servant to endeavour to gain the confidence, and win the affection of the chiefs and people of a conquered country, by the impression of his acquaintance with, and seeming regard to, their peculiarities and propensities, and in the superintendence and management of their concerns to know the bents by which he may seize and work upon them. To touch upon such feelings, without giving offence, demands, on all occasions, the exercise of discretion, temper, and judgment; but, when successfully done, it is easy, by a kindly manner and persuasive address, to lead the misguided and ignorant from error and antiquated usages, to appreciate the advantages attendant on intellectual improvement, and the benefits resulting from science and moral feeling.

In the Sikh States, the administration of civil and criminal justice is vested in the sirdar, or chief. Crimes and trespasses, as in the Middle Ages, are atoned for by money; the fines are unlimited by any rule, and generally levied arbitrarily according to the means of the offender, whose property is attached, and his family placed under restraint to enforce payment. These amercements form a branch of revenue to the chief, and a fruitful source of peculation to his officers, who too frequently have recourse to the most harsh and cruel means to elicit confessions, and extort money for real or imaginary offences. He who gains his point pays his Shookurana, or present of gratitude, and he who is cast pays his Juremana, or penalty. The wealthy may secure justice, but the indigent are likely to obtain something less. The larger the bribe the more chance of success. A case where the right is clear and undeniable is often allowed to lie over, that the present may be augmented. All officers under the chief, and employed by him in districts and departments, follow his example; but are ultimately thrown into a bora, or dungeon, and required to refund, and, when they have satisfied the cupidity of their superior, they are generally permitted to resume their functions, honoured with the shawl, as a mark of favour. Capital punishment is very seldom inflicted.

The most incorrigible culprits are punished with the loss of either one or both hands, and deprivation of nose or ears; but mutilation is rare, for whoever has the means to pay, or can procure a respectable security to pay for him, within a given time, may expiate the most heinous transgressions.

On the commission of a daka, or burglary, a quzzakee, or highway robbery, the chief, within whose jurisdiction the act had been perpetrated, was called upon to make restitution; and, should he decline, the chief whose subject has suffered, resorts to the *lex talionis*, and drives off several hundred heads of cattle, or retaliates in some way or other. This summary method of obtaining indemnification for all robberies attended with aggravating circumstances, is a measure of absolute necessity, as many of the petty chiefs, their officers and zumeendars, harbour thieves, and participate in their guilty practices.

When a petty theft is substantiated, either through the medium of a Muhur-khaee, or the production of a Mooddo or Numoona (the confession of one of the thieves, or a part of the stolen property), the sufferer has generally, as a preliminary, to pay the Chuharum, or fourth, as a perquisite to the chief, or his thanadar, ere he can recover the amount of his losses. Independent of this, the Muhur-khaee, or approver, generally stipulates for a full pardon, and that no demand shall be made on the confessing delinquent for his Kundee, viz., any, or such, portion of the property as may have accrued to him as his dividend of the spoil. This share of the spoil becomes chargeable to the other thieves, and, on settling the accounts, it is distributed equally amongst them.

In all cases of stolen cattle, it is an established rule, when the Sooragh-Khoj, or trace of the footsteps, is carried to the gate, or into the fields of any village, the zumeendars of that village must either show the track beyond their own boundary, and allow the village to be searched, or pay the value of the cattle.

The rules of succession to landed property in the Sikh States are arbitrary, and are variously modified in accordance to the usages, the interests, and prejudices of different families, nor is it practicable to reduce the anomalous system to a fixed and leading principle. A distinction obtains in the canons of inheritance, between the Munjhee and Malwo Sihks, or Singhs; the former are so termed from the tract situated between the Ravee and Beeah rivers, from which they originally sprung, migrating thence and extending their conquests through the Punjab, and into the Sirhind province, where, being of a military and predatory character, they soon conquered for themselves a permanent possession. The Malwa chiefs are the Puteeala, Jheend, and Nabarajals, and the Bhaee of Khytul. The three first named are descendants of a common ancestor, named Phool, who was choudhuree of a village near Balenda, and are from him often collectively styled the Phoolkeean. The progenitor of the Bhaee of Khytul, having rendered some service to one of the Sikh Gooroos, the appellation of Bhaee, or brother, was conferred upon him as a mark of distinguished approbation: and the persons of all the Bhaees are consequently held in a degree of respect above their fellows.

The practice of succession to property, both real and personal, amongst the Manjhee Singh, is by Bhaee-bund and Choonda-bund; the first being an equal distribution of all lands, forts, tenements, and moveables, among sons, with, an extra or double share to the eldest, termed "Khurch-Sirdaree," assimilating to the double share in the law of Moses. Choonda-bund is an equal division among mothers for their respective male issue.

When a Manjhee Singh dies, leaving no male offspring, his brothers, or his nephews of the full blood, assume the right of succession, to which the

widow or widows become competitors. According to the Shasters (if they may be considered applicable to public property and chiefships), the prior title of the widows is held; but the Sikhs, with a view to avoid an open and direct violation of a known law, have a custom termed *Kurawa* or *Chadurdula*, which obtains in every family, with exception to those of the *Bhaees*. The eldest surviving brother of the deceased places a white robe over, and the neeth, or ring, in the nose of the widow, which ceremony constitutes her his wife.

This practice accords with the Hindoo and Mosaic laws, and acts as a counteractive to the many evils attendant on female rule: If the free-will of the widow were consulted, it is scarcely to be doubted, she would prefer the possession of power, and the charms of liberty, to the alternative of sacrificing her claims to her brother-in-law, and taking her station amongst his rival wives. Judging from the masculine disposition,—want of modesty, and of delicate feeling, which form the characteristic feature of Sikh females, necessity, and not choice, must have led them to yield to the adoption of an usage, which must often be repugnant to their natures, and disgusting to their thoughts.

(To be continued.)

NEWMAN STREET FREE CHURCH SUNDAY LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT.

CONSIDERING the immense importance attached to the Christian doctrine of Atonement, in the popular theory of salvation, it will not be thought either out of place or wonderful that so many bulky and learned treatises have been composed by learned divines, with intent to unravel and expound its mysteries: but it is surprising that even now its peculiarities are not definitely agreed upon. The Christian world professes to believe, but not to understand it. It endorses, but does not explain. Neither has it positively settled in what sense it is to be understood. Every Church has its own method of exposition; its own theories of Repentance, Regeneration, and Justifying Faith. In ordinary conversation it is the practice to speak of it as being so simple that even a little child can comprehend it, but in discussion, and especially when they are engaged as disputants who have carefully studied the subject, it is not only readily confessed, but is urged as a defensive argument, that even the most powerful intellect is incapable of understanding it; so that instead of attempting, or even desiring, to comprehend, we are called upon to accept it in faith, and to bow, as believers, in all humility of spirit. It would be as much out of place as it would be useless were we now to inquire how these contradictory notions are to be harmonised; so that, instead, of pursuing a profitless course, I shall turn from them to discuss three more important questions—Whence came the theory of an Atonement? What are the prevalent Atonement theories? Why are we constrained to reject them? And in answering these it will be possible, if not to exhaust the theme, at least to present its peculiarities in a light sufficiently clear for enabling all persons who may desire it to pursue the study into its minuter details.

The first question, "Whence came the theory of an Atonement?" has been answered in various ways, according to the foregone conclusions and dogmatic notions of the speakers; one party maintaining that, "as it could not have been conceived in the human mind it is to be traced to a Divine revelation;"* another maintains that it has no heavenly but a purely human origin, and, consequently, is to be traced to its root by the light of history.† The former writer (and he is supposed to be a great authority upon the subject) quotes from Delaney, to the effect that whatever practice has obtained universally in the world must have obtained

* Magee on the Atonement, § 1711.

† Dobson on the Church, p. 78.

its authority from some dictate of reason, or some demand of nature, or some principle of interest, or from some powerful influence or injunction of some Being of universal authority. Now, the practice of animal sacrifice did not obtain from reason; for no reasonable notions of God could teach men that He could delight in blood, or in the fat of slain beasts. Nor will any man say that we have any natural instinct to gratify in spilling the blood of an innocent creature. Nor could there be any temptation from appetite to do this in those ages, when the whole sacrifice was consumed by fire; or when, if it was not, yet men wholly abstained from flesh; and, consequently, this practice did not owe its origin to any principle of interest. Nay, so far from anything of this, that the destruction of innocent and useful creatures is evidently against nature, against reason, and against interest; and therefore must be founded in an authority, whose influence was as powerful as the practice was universal; and that could be none but the authority of God, the Sovereign of the world; or of Adam, the founder of the human race. If it be said of Adam, the question still remains, what motive determined him to the practice? It could not be nature, reason, or interest, as has been already shown; it must, therefore, have been the authority of his Sovereign; and had Adam enjoined it to his posterity, it is not to be imagined that they would have obeyed him in so extraordinary and expensive a rite, from any other motive than the command of God. If it be urged that superstitions prevail unaccountably in the world, it may be answered that all superstition has its origin in true religion, all superstition is an abuse, and all abuse supposes a right and proper use. And if this be the case in superstitious practices that are of lesser moment and extent, what shall be said of a practice existing through all ages, and pervading every nation? * It is quite amusing to notice how adroitly the learned author omits to notice all those features which unveil its true origin, and assumes all the data upon which he bases his own mistaken theory. It is quite true that no "*reasonable notions* of God could teach "men that He could delight in blood, or in the fat of slain beasts;" but does it not still remain to be proved that He does delight in them, or that He ever did so? The notion is unreasonable; but does the Church acknowledge the invalidity of unreasonable principles? If so, then what becomes of the Atonement? And can we imagine that all the ideas formed of God by the early races were perfectly consistent with those of our more cultivated reason? The truth appears to be that man did not begin with sacrifice, but with burnt offerings—with gifts prompted by gratitude; and it was only after the lapse of many ages that the complete theory of expiation through sacrifice came into vogue, and this was not the child of any supernatural forces. It was the natural child of experience and habit. The earliest men, who looked out of themselves into the profound and mysterious all of things, and the wonders of life and space, were incapable of conceiving either the earth, or the stars, or man, as we conceive them. They were limited in vision through being deficient in knowledge, and it was only when they had risen out of the lower spheres of animal existence, and had accumulated knowledge, that it became possible for them to conceive of God as a Being existing apart from and superior to themselves. But even then, when ages had elapsed, and various forms of faith had been submerged beneath the rising tides of truer perceptions, they thought of God only as a bigger and more powerful man; all the passions of humanity were ascribed unto Him, and it was but natural for men to believe that as they did unto one another so also must they do unto Him. And in what other way did they deal with each other to compensate for wrong actions than to pay a penalty—to give of their flocks or goods, and thus procure pardon for their sin? Not only did they make restitution, but they gave also of their wealth, and when the idea arose in their minds that in their actions they frequently sinned against God, the same rule was applied, and sacrifice became the means of compensation—the source of forgiveness. From the admitted premises the conclusion was logically worked out; so that although reason may not have taught them to believe in sacrifice, it is quite certain that they believed themselves to be perfectly in accordance with sound conclusions.

* *Magée on the Atonement. Illustration, No. 1v.*

Here, however, it will be well to recall to mind the facts which prove the universality of the sacrificial ideas. It appears clear enough in various passages in the Old Testament, that the people of Canaan sacrificed their sons and daughters to Moloch,* and to Baal.† They also sacrificed to Dagon,‡ but the victims are not particularized. Their other gods are named Chemosh, Chiun, Milcom, and Ashtaroth, with the still more comprehensive appellation, the Host of Heaven. But there is no sacrifice connected with their names; we merely learn that the Israelites were but too ready to join in the idolatries and pollutions of their neighbours: "they served their idols, which were "a snare unto them; yea, they sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils, and "shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom "they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood."§

So it was in the classic worship of Greece and Italy. A white bull was offered to Jupiter, a black to Pluto, and the horse to Neptune; the same valued animal to Mars; bullocks and lambs to Apollo; oxen, goats, and sheep, indiscriminately, to various of the gods; ewe-lambs and calves, and pregnant sows, to others. Sometimes, however they added victims on which they could have set no value, except so far as they contributed to their amusement in the chase. The wolf and the hawk were sacrificed to Apollo and Mars; and the latter sometimes enjoyed the addition of magpies and vultures, dogs and asses. The altars of Venus were seldom stained with blood, but those of Diana frequently reeked even with the blood of man. The Lacedæmonians offered her human victims; but, as they advanced in civilization, they spared the lives of their children, and merely flogged them until her altars were sprinkled with their blood. The people of Taurica set no value on the sacrifices they offered her; they were merely the strangers who were shipwrecked on their shores. But, probably, they conceived that in her eyes they were of value. Menelaus, with an equal consideration for his own feelings, and disregard for those of others, no doubt, held a similar opinion with respect to the predilections of THE WINDS. They were for a time unfavourable, and he could not depart from Egypt. Herodotus tells us that he seized two children of Egyptian parents, and offered them in sacrifice to those adverse gods. It may be presumed that they breathed on him more auspiciously, otherwise the historian might have had to record that the Egyptians had returned the favour he had conferred on them by sacrificing himself to Isis or Osiris, Apis or Anubis. Agamemnon, however, did not spare his own daughter at Aulis, to obtain a favourable breeze to waft his armies to Troy.

Apis also rejoiced in valuable sacrifices. A white bull was slain at his altar, and the head of the victim was cut off and cast into the river, accompanied by the following execration; "May all the evils impending over Egypt, but particularly "over those who devote this sacrifice to thee, be averted on this head."||

This latter form involves the whole theory of the Atonement; the bull was to bear pain and calamity in place of human beings bearing it, and, to all intents and purposes, that is identical in thought with the Christian theory. The form differs, but not the fundamental idea. True, indeed, that, according to some writers, this is to be understood as referring, not to sins which had been committed, but to those accidental evils, such as sickness and losses, which overtake us in our careers; but, even if this were so, the argument is not changed, because the idea was that such evils were but punishments for sins previously committed.

But to answer that class of theologians who contend that the sacrifices of the Pagan world had nothing in them to justify us in speaking of them, as offered in the character of an atonement for sin, it is necessary to refer to the atonements offered by the Greeks and Romans. In the opening of the Iliad we have a description of the praying of Apollo's priest for vengeance upon the Grecian army, because its chiefs will not restore his daughter, whom they had taken prisoner. Apollo, faithful to the earnest seeker, answered his prayer:—

* Leviticus xviii. 21; xx. 2-5; Jeremiah xxxii. 35; 2 Kings xxi. 10.

+ 2 Kings xxi. 3-6; Jeremiah xix. 5. † Judges xvi. 23. § Psalm cvi. 36-38.

|| Theology and Metaphysics of Scripture, vol. ii. p. 195.

"And vex'd at heart, down from the tops of steep heaven stoop'd; his bow,
And quiver cover'd round, his hands did on his shoulders throw;
And of the angry Deity the arrows as he mov'd
Rattled about him. Like the night he rang'd the host, and rov'd
(Apart the fleet set) terribly; with his hard-loosing hand
His silver bow twang'd; and his shafts did first the mules command
And swift hounds; then the Greeks themselves his deadly arrows shot.
The fires of death went never out."

A council was called among the Greeks, at which it was resolved that the daughter should be returned; but not without sacrifices, to appease the anger of the God. The rejoicing father stood ready upon the beach:—

"All come ashore, they all expos'd the holy hecatomb
To angry Phœbus, and, with it, Chryseis welcom'd home;
Whom to her sire, wise Ithacus, that did at th' altar stand,
For honour, led, and, speaking thus, resign'd her to his hand:
'Chrysees, the mighty king of men, great Agamemnon, sends
Thy lov'd seed by my hands to thine: and to thy God commends
A hecatomb, which my charge is to sacrifice, and seek
Our much-sigh-mix'd woe his recurrence, invok'd by every Greek.'

Thus he resign'd her, and her sire receiv'd her highly joy'd.
About the well-built altar, then, they orderly employ'd
The sacred offering, wash'd their hands, took salt cakes; and the priest,
With hands held up to heaven, thus pray'd: 'O thou that all things seest,
Fount of Chrysa, whose fair hand doth guardfully dispose
Celestial Cilla, governing in all power Tenedos,
O hear thy priest, and as thy hand, in free grace to my prayers,
Shot fervent plague-shafts through the Greeks, now lighten their affairs
With health renew'd and quite remove th' infection from their blood.'

He pray'd; and to his pray'rs again the God propitious stood.
All, after pray'r, cast on salt cakes, drew back, kill'd, flay'd the beeves,
Cut out and dubb'd with fat their thighs, fair dress'd with doubled leaves,
And on them all the sweetbreads prick'd. The priest, with small sere wood,
Did sacrifice, pour'd on red wine; by whom the young men stood,
And turn'd, in five ranks, spits. On which (the legs enough) they eat
The inwards; then in giggots cut the other fit for meat,
And put to fire: which roasted well they drew. The labour done,
They serv'd the feast in that fed all to satisfaction.

Desire of meat and wine thus quench'd, the youths crown'd cups of wine,
Drunk off, and fill'd again to all. That day was held divine,
And spent in pœans to the Sun, who heard with pleas'd ear;
When whose bright chariot stoop'd to sea, and twilight hid the clear,
All soundly on their cables slept, even till the night was worn.
And when the Lady of the Light, the rosy-finger'd Morn,
Rose from the hills, all fresh arose, and to the camp retir'd.
Apollo with a fore-right wind their swelling bark inspir'd.
The top-mast hoisted, milk-white sails on his round breast they put,
The mizens strooted with the gale, the ship her course did cut
So swiftly that the parted waves against her ribs did roar;
Which, coming to the camp, they drew aloft the sandy shore;
Where, laid on stocks, each soldier kept his quarter as before."

(To be continued.)

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;.

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED,

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LETTER AND ITS FRUITS.

It must be confessed that of late George Lester had gradually declined from being the most cheerful into becoming a most unhappy man. His situation as Rector of Crosswood, with all its numerous advantages, social, pecuniary, and healthian, had become anything but pleasant; for, and entirely independent of the fact that his parishioners were querulous, were given to slander, and practically at variance with all true ideas of religion, he was rendered uncomfortable by the ever-growing conviction—a conviction which, unperceived, had become supreme—that the religious theory of his Church needed to be completely remodelled. At heart he confided in the old prayers, and repeated with infantile trust the grace before and after his meals. In all his language and thoughts he was true alike to God and humanity, while in his pulpit he was always able to give a colouring to the old texts which brought them into perfect harmony with his own exalted views of God and duty. His expositions of some passages were of the highest order, considered as specimens of philosophical reasoning. At times, while he was dwelling upon the deeper meanings of some texts against which freethought exception had been taken, or when showing forth and explaining what he called “the glorious lessons of life” embodied in some of the Biblical narratives, he brought all his wide reading to bear upon the subject, so as to reflect a thousand lights upon it; and, at such times, it was impossible for his hearers to conclude otherwise than that he believed the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to be the most complete embodiments of wisdom which the world had ever possessed. And, for the time, he believed so himself; but there were other hours in which fearful doubts came to affright him—hours when the terrible questions arose in his mind, “Am I importing modern thoughts into ancient phrases? am I supplying meanings instead of finding them? am I playing

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES. VOL. II.

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fast and loose with words, so as Jesuitically to make them convey my own ideas—my own meaning, rather than that which their author intended?" and then, although anxious to avoid it, he was compelled to confess that, as a rule, the latter was the truth.

Frequently, after endeavouring to meet and dispel some doubt suggested by one of his hearers—and having succeeded in satisfying the inquirer—he sat down dissatisfied with his explanation to think the matter out for himself. And at such times when this occurred, as lately it had several times, the morning frequently dawned ere he had sought his pillow. Upon one occasion, when he had been pressed by a Freethinker with the question, "Why, in presence of the facts as set forth in the Bible, is it that Esau is denounced as a bad unfeeling man, who sold his birthright, while Jacob is praised to the skies as a model of perfection, although he seized upon the hour of his brother's weakness and hunger, in order to induce him to sell it?" he had supplied the stereotyped answer, which partially satisfied the inquirer, but failed to satisfy himself. He sat late that night—or far into the morning—and, during those still hours, he was engaged in thinking out the entire lives of the two men, so as to conceive them in all their native characteristics; and ultimately he reached the conclusion that Esau was the bold, honest, fearless, open-hearted, unsuspecting, hunter—a man full of feeling and filial piety; while Jacob was the cowardly, selfish, fraudulent, lying, and suspicious, wealth-grubber. Thus he actually grew to love Esau, and proportionately to hate Jacob; for the former appeared to him to be alive to all manlike emotions, while the other seemed only to care for getting on—for obtaining his own selfish ends—without regard to the means employed. At first, he was inclined to agree with those authors who apologise for the conduct of Jacob in deceiving and deliberately lying to poor old Isaac, on the assumption that, as he was but a mere youth, and, in perfect obedience, was acting under the command of his mother, we are not justified in treating him as a free agent, so to hold him responsible. But, desiring to learn how old Jacob really was at the time of the fraud, he collected together all the scattered Biblical notices from whence such knowledge is to be derived, when he found that he could not have been less than forty years old, and probably was over sixty. This rendered it impossible to continue the old apology, and left him no other resource than to believe that Jacob was to be spoken of as guilty, and denounced as any other criminal would be.

Other points were suggested by various inquirers with similar results, for Lester could not play with his convictions, or pretend unto himself to believe things which were repugnant to his moral nature. But, although clinging with his whole soul to the truth as he perceived it, although resolutely setting his foot upon every theory which was at variance with common sense and true morality, he could not utterly abandon the general belief without enduring great agony of mind. At times he sat in his study, and while contemplating the future, he was bathed in tears; not that he feared the curses of men, or dreaded what they could do unto him, if he publicly opposed their cherished convictions, but this was his dread, that he might be in error, and be the means of leading others astray. And when the thought came for an instant—as come it would—that it would be safest to avoid all public allusions to such vexed questions, that his own security rendered silence necessary, it was immediately followed by the conviction that no man can properly respect himself, nor can he be morally justified, who continues to teach that which he has ceased to believe. Moreover, he was satisfied that to teach falsely

must be equally evil, whether the teaching be in accordance with, or in opposition to, the popular belief, and thus the all-important point to him was on which side lay the truth. Gradually he was coming to the condition of mind in which his allegiance to the Church could be nothing more than a barren form, without even the shadow of reality. But he was now about to contemplate the cost of publicly declaring his true state of mind, and to make arrangements which shed a gloom over all his future prospects.

Many letters had recently passed between Crosswood and Devonshire—letters full of anxious expostulation, of loving sympathy, of eloquent entreaty, and of passionate pleading, but none the less of gloomy forebodings. Mary had written, as she had promised her aunt, but not in the spirit Mrs. Dorton desired, and certainly not quite so unreservedly as was to have been expected from her general openness of nature. She told Lester how her "womanly fears had been called forth by the current reports" relating to his unorthodox and unchurchmanlike opinions, some of which she set forth in detail, without disguising the part played by Bridling; but she did not speak further of her own state of mind than that it would cause her unutterable pain were she thoroughly satisfied the report was true. Nothing was said about her settled purpose to decline his hand. At the time of writing, the thought had entered her mind that probably the whole affair had been greatly magnified. Hope came to strengthen this idea, which grew rapidly into conviction, and for some days she permitted herself to indulge the delicious dream. Lester was astonished that she should have heard what at that time he had not breathed unto himself. When she first wrote upon the subject he imagined himself to be perfectly orthodox, and had he been asked the question by a stranger, without hesitation he would have declared his faith to be such; for, although he had consciously abandoned many of the popular notions about Biblical texts, he still believed his own views to be in perfect accordance with the proper sense of the Biblical narratives. He fancied himself to be a real Bible Christian, yet, in fact, and with Scriptural truth, unconsciously he had removed to a much greater distance from the orthodox ideas. What, however, he had not confessed unto himself was perceived by many of his hearers.

There are men who have some instinctive sense through which they scent out heresy, but not without frequently mistaking the meaning of what they hear. The charity which hopeth all things, and thinketh no evil, is so completely a stranger to their thoughts, that they scarcely ever hesitate to denounce its exhibition, as being a sin against God and good taste; hence it comes that they are constantly mourning over the "religious declension of the nineteenth century," and hence it so frequently happens that all they are able to remember of a sermon are those portions—susceptible probably of a double meaning—which may be represented as at variance with the truth, as they understand it. As a rule, they are as ignorant as they are suspicious—as intolerant of all opinions at variance with their own, as they are incompetent to form sound ones. They are not in any shape or form religious in life, but only in profession. They waste so much time, and talk so much about Christianity, that they have no odd hours left wherein to reduce its nobler principles to practice. To a considerable extent, their religion is "done" at the expense of the reputation of better men; they prove their creed to be irreproachable by picking holes in that of others; and, when they feel the need of "providential assistance," their efforts to deserve it are made in the direction of proving that others are unworthy. As a rule, their victims are even more orthodox than themselves; but, occasionally, their suspicions are justified, and then their conduct is sure

to increase the scepticism of which they complain. The injustice of churchmen, the bigotry of leading elders, and the misrepresentations of Freethinkers, which preachers indulge in, has done more than all the literary sceptics to increase the number of English Freethinkers. Had the clergy treated doubt as a disease, instead of being a heinous crime, the progress of Freethought would have been much less rapid.

Such persons were rather more numerous in Crosswood than elsewhere, and they had concluded that their Rector was a Freethinker—a regular heretic—long before he had suspected himself of having even a tendency to such freedom. But, when he sat down to reply to Mary's letter, the real condition of things became clear unto his mind, and probably he was as much startled by his real convictions as she could be. In writing to her it became a matter of direct answers to plain questions, for he loved her too dearly and manfully either to equivocate, or in any sense to mislead her. As a rule, he wrote his letters right off, never drafting them first, or even going over to correct and amplify the sentences; but that letter was rewritten at least a dozen times, and, when at length it was sent to the post, he almost passionately desired to have it back, for alteration and amendment.

In that epistle he denied the charge of being a sceptic in any wicked or irreligious sense; but confessed that there were "many passages in the Hebrew writings—many narratives in the Four Gospels, and numerous theological theories, commonly accredited—which he could not read or repeat in the spirit of a believer." The letter was full of true religious feeling and fervour, but Mary saw only, or dwelt only upon, the passages containing the confession of his departure from the strict letter of the orthodox faith, and that, to her, was quite as bad as if he had confessed acceptance of downright Atheism. Knowing nothing of the actual condition of theology as a science, believing that, without exception, good men placed implicit confidence in every chapter and verse in the two Testaments, and being one of those who endorse all that is authoritatively taught in the Creeds and Articles, she could not conceive how a man could be religious without accepting all that she accepted. Had she been born and reared in a Catholic or Mahometan country her adherence to the popular theory would have been precisely the same—equally blind, unwavering, and complete, for as yet she had never dared to use her reason when religion formed the subject of her thoughts. Her conviction now was—and it almost rent her heart—that God had abandoned her betrothed for the devil to take up; and when reflecting upon the course which she should pursue, it was no light matter for her to determine upon remaining, as she thought, upon the side of God. Yet when her mind was made up, and she had resolved to forego all her hopes of wedded happiness rather than become a sceptic's bride, she could not distinctly say so in her letter. She wrote as one who was wounded, but not irretrievably lost. She reminded him of his "mother's hopes," of his "subscription to the Articles," and of the "terrible consequences which follow when men forget God," but nowhere did she distinctly say, "And I must decline your hand!" Indeed, throughout the letter there were many of the old endearing epithets, although in every instance they were used with more than the ordinary constraint, but, as they were associated with expressions of grief at his change of religion, they were not calculated to open Lester's eyes to the gulf yawning before him.

Immediately on the receipt of this epistle Lester sat down to reply at full length, intending to convince his betrothed that love for God and truth, that respect for the Scriptures, compelled him to speak and act as he had done.

He poured out his whole heart, exhibiting all its treasures, both of love and religion—what he felt towards God and his future wife; and having told all his hopes, anxieties, and mental troubles, he entered into arguments to justify his new convictions, with the intent of winning Mary over to them. But he had not fairly calculated the strength of her impressions. Her love was beyond doubt, and upon any other point his word or wish would have been law to her, but on this question there was no human power which could have turned her away from her purpose. Still, there was no such indication in her answers, and after several letters had passed the Rector almost began to hope he should succeed in satisfying all her doubts, and in removing all her fears. For this he prepared, in one epistle of no ordinary length, and which was written immediately after the close of his hood-winking debate with Barrington.

It could not have been that Bridling had learnt the nature of the recent correspondence, and yet, had he done so, he could not have hit the mark more successfully than he did, by his sermon on the Sunday following the receipt by Mary of Lester's last letter, for he preached from the text, "There is a faith that overcometh the world, and there is a faith which is overcome by the world," and it was upon the latter clause he chiefly dwelt, showing how "the frail children of earth refuse the leading of the Lord, in order that they may work out schemes of their own," and how, "through clinging to the idols of their hearts, they prove faithless to the commander of heaven." He dwelt upon this with great unction, and was especially grand while descanting upon how many persons, who declared themselves unable to afford a penny a week to the missionary fund, for saving souls in heathen lands, yet indulged in tea and sugar, with other superfluities. Probably this was urged because, during the past week, which he had devoted to "missionary work," several poor old women had declined to subscribe; but his great aim in the discourse was to operate upon the heart of Mary, and, if possible, to coerce her into esteeming it to be a duty she owed to heaven to abandon her engagement with Lester. Until this was done, he felt sure all his love approaches would be fruitless, but that effected and the coast cleared, he felt certain of success.

Mary sat listening intently, and feeling as one condemned; she knew that the preacher was ignorant of the contents, even of the tone of her letters, and concluded that this discourse was a special warning kindly vouchsafed her by heaven, which she dared not disobey, so that immediately after her return home she sat down to compose the letter, which was to leave her husbandless, unfriended, and alone, in a world which she no longer loved. Still it was with great calmness she wrote thus:—

"Dear Lester,—I feel that this must be my last letter. All my hopes of happiness have vanished; once more I am free and alone, so to live and die. Hitherto I have dealt unjustly with both you and myself, in not stating plainly what must be, now that you have abandoned the only religion and faith whereby men can be saved. I wished to say, but could not summon courage, that I dare not become your wife. Your dear mother made me promise that I would not marry you unless you kept in the Church, or at least adhered to our holy religion. She always had a fear that you would not, and it was her constant commandment to me never to marry, to become the mother of children who would be trained to reject the word of heaven and the redemption of Jesus. I promised her to be obedient, and although she is gone, I am still bound by my pledge; for when she lay upon her dying

bed, even then, and to me, they were her last words ; she bade me remember my promise. Ofttimes you have asked me what that promise was, and, although I never told it, yet it was the only secret I had from you—now you know all, and will judge me kindly. You would not respect me were I to be untrue unto that dear angel mother of ours. No, Lester. I dare not marry you now ; for my life would be miserable, and my future happiness must be destroyed. Think of this, dear Lester—how could I be happy in heaven, knowing that both my husband and children were suffering the eternal punishment of unbelief ? There could be no heaven for me unless those I loved upon earth were my companions. All else would be vain. No, Lester, no, it must not be, for I dare not forsake my God, although I love you above all else upon earth. How happy should I have been in becoming your wife ! I have not told you half my love, but now I may confess that, after the thought that I was to be your wife there was nothing else in life I cared for. And even now I could sacrifice my own soul to save yours. I would be content to bear the anger of heaven, if by doing so its wrath would be turned away from your head. There is no agony I would refuse to endure if it would save you from suffering. Nay, Lester, and now I would even marry you, and do all that you wished, but for the thought of what suffering would be entailed upon our innocent babes. No ! no ! it must not, cannot be. And yet, how I have prayed to God to keep you in the right path—how I have petitioned Jesus to preserve you unto himself.

"But, Lester, dear Lester, do not misunderstand, and do not be angry with me ; I can give you up, but I cannot bear that you should be angry with me. And you will not misunderstand my motives. I have seen enough of the world to know how fickle and ungenerous are many of my sex, but you will not class me with them. I could not bear for you to think I can ever look upon another with the eyes of love. Indeed, I wish that were unsaid, for I know you are too just and wise to misjudge me so greatly. Remember that poverty and sickness, and the hatred of the world, would never have operated to make me change my mind. Indeed, even now that is not changed. You are the only being on earth I love, and now I love you all the more fondly because I know your danger. Had it been that poverty had come upon you, then how gladly should I have used my hands to earn the means of making you comfortable ; had sickness or blindness, or any other physical calamity befallen you, I would have been your constant nurse ; and had the world hated you, I should have been almost glad, for in my love and tenderness I would have been all the world to you. All, or any of these, I should have hailed rather than feared, and their coming would but have made our union more complete ; but now that the calamity has come in the form of unbelief, all that I can do is to devote my time here, and hereafter, to praying God to have mercy upon your soul. To that will I devote myself. Neither pleasure nor profit shall induce me to enter a world wherein I should be prevented from fulfilling that promise. And do not endeavour to turn me from my purpose, do not endeavour to argue me into compliance with your wishes. I am but a poor weak girl, and, loving you as I love, I cannot but fear that your words would subdue me. I trust to your sense of honour, and that will protect me. But, Lester, should it be that in after years my prayers are answered, so that you return once more within the Church of God, need I say that my heart would overflow with joy ? Be a faithful minister of the Church, and I will be your slave ; but, being out of its fold, I can only weep, and pray God to have mercy on your soul. Forgive me all my

faults and failings ; forgive me all the pain I am now inflicting, although it is not half what I feel, and believe me to continue,

“ Your loving, but heart-broken,

“ MARY.”

Lester read this letter without uttering a word : he read it again, but with strong emotion, which could not be wholly held in subjection, for as he read the big tears stole down his fine face, while a gloomy aspect gathered upon his countenance. The letter fell from his hand when its second perusal had closed, and he sat motionless until Ella entered and roused him from his mournful reflections. Perceiving that something was amiss, she enquired for the cause, when, departing from his usual course, he handed her the letter.

Ella read every word, not because of feeling anxious to avoid missing any portion, but simply because of being at a loss to suggest any means of modifying the force of the shock. On the one hand, she knew the force of Lester's love, and, on the other, the firmness of Mary upon such a point, and, knowing these, she could not conceive how the calamity was to be averted. Having completed the reading, she stooped over her brother, and, kissing him, whispered,

“ Though all the world shall forsake you I will never fail to be your companion. I am astonished that Mary could be so cruel, but probably she will see her error, and change her mind.”

“ We cannot hope for that, Ella, and we must not blame her. She has been trained to believe without enquiry, and it is certain that her very sense of honour will prevent her from enquiring now. If she were reasoned out of her religious ideas, she would fall back upon the idea that her hopes and love had deceived her, and then, at once, she would abandon all thoughts of adopting the new theories. There is no hope in her, and there is none that I can return to the exploded theologies. In fact, and now that this fearful rupture has occurred, I should hardly be able to believe the old theories to be true, even were their truth to be demonstrated to me, for I should fear that I was led by my desire to secure the hand of my heart's idol. There is nothing for me to do but to bear patiently until my cup is filled, and I shall lie down to rest in the old churchyard.”

“ Hush, George ! hush, and speak not of death. We two can be all the world to each other, and if I cannot compensate for all that you have lost in Mary, I can make the world and life to be worth enjoying.”

This was uttered in those deeper and musical tones which Ella employed whenever she was saying anything very important, and that came from her heart ; but now they were so peculiarly sweet and solemn that Lester could not avoid being deeply moved, although for some moments he answered not. At length, taking her hand, he said,

“ Ella, for years we have been brother and sister in the truest sense of that term, and although I did not always appear to perceive it, I have always felt that you were making sacrifices on my behalf. You have done your part, and now I must look to make you happy, which will not be if you are constantly bound to my side. I had hoped that there would be two marriages on one day—there can be but one, yet that shall not be marred through my misadventure. You, at least, shall go to the altar.”

“ George,” cried Ella, “ I have not spoken on that point.”

“ No, dear Ella,” interposed Lester ; “ but Barrington has.”

“ So he may have done ; but, George, I never entertained the thought,

only as connected with yourself and Mary, and if that is not to be, then I'll not leave you alone. And if Mary knew you as I do, she would never have written that letter."

"Perhaps not, Ella; and yet does it not generally happen that they who are the most anxious to be right give the most offence, and endure the most? But my troubles would be increased were I daily made to feel that your happiness and that of Barrington had been wrecked through my loving the truth. It shall not be; yet, still, I shall never forget your devotion. And why should Mary be different from yourself?"

"I wish she had never gone to Devonshire, for had she been here I feel that her eyes would have been opened long ago. Why not? You are the only religious man I know, and if you were to deny religion altogether I should love you all the same, because you would be my noble and generous brother in spite of your belief. Indeed, I am quite convinced that the creed has but little to do with the life, and that's why I am so angry with Mary."

Just at this point Barrington entered the room to announce that his immediate presence in London was required, and before the words, "I wish you would go with me," had escaped his lips, Lester answered, "I will go." He knew of a gentleman who would gladly use his pulpit, and before three hours had passed the two travellers were on their way to the great city.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XLVII.

SPREAD OF LIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE.

PETRARCH's long life had been devoted to the attempt to restore the taste for ancient learning, and he did much to introduce to the notice, even of his own age, the Latin Classics. He, too, was the first to point out to his time that the Greek language and literature were worthy of the attention of the learned. And though it is true that the faint rudiments of Greek learning, encouraged by him, and which Boccacio had sedulously sought to plant, soon withered and expired, the succeeding generation being content with the improvement of Latin eloquence and the study of the Latin Classics,* yet that is rather to be attributed to the want of the means of pursuing the study of Greek, than to the absence of the desire. This is proven by the welcome given to Bessarion and Chrysolaras, and other isolated Greeks, who had taught in Italy, previously to the Fall of Constantinople, as also by the ready audience given to Gemisthus Pletho, and his signal success in reviving the Platonic philosophy. In fact, the intellectual flame lighted by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccacio, in the fourteenth century, had never died out; so when, on the Fall of Constantinople, the means of studying Greek, and of becoming acquainted with the Greek literature were furnished, they were eagerly seized, and all Italy was soon alive to the value of the new learning, always excepting, of course, the professors and bigoted supporters of the old scholastic system.

Petrarch deserves honourable mention, also, as having been the first to set the example of collecting and collating ancient classical MSS., and although, as a matter of course, he was unable to do much in this respect for Greek antiquity, he succeeded in correcting the text of several of the

* Gibbon. *Decline and Fall*, chap. lxvi.

Latin Classics. The record of the difficulties which Petrarch encountered in doing this, throws a light upon the real relation of the labours of the monkish transcribers to literature. It is a statement which Church historians and orthodox writers, in general, delight in making, that dark and benighted as the Christianity of the Middle Ages was, it yet was in various ways the means of preserving for after ages the learning of antiquity, and one of those means most generally insisted on, is the labours of the monks in the transcription of old MSS.* And yet Berington tells us, and his testimony as a Roman Catholic may be considered satisfactory, that in the time of Petrarch "the libraries of Italy, and therefore of Europe, had "little to show besides some works of the fathers, of ancient and modern "theologians, of ecclesiastical and civil jurisprudence, of medicine, astrology, "and philosophy, and even these in no abundance. The names of the "classical writers were barely retained; their productions, and the times in "which they lived were miserably confounded, and the authenticity of authors "not unfrequently disregarded."† We are, therefore, justified in saying that not only was mankind led into the darkness of barbarism and ignorance by the Christianity of the Middle Ages, but even the miserable amount of credit which has been generally assumed to be due to it for preserving some relics of ancient learning, cannot be claimed for it.

Cosmo de' Medici's love of learning led him to follow the example of Petrarch, in the collection of ancient MSS., while his great wealth and extensive commercial relations, combined with the events of his time, gave him peculiar opportunities and facilities in this matter. His agents and correspondents were directed by him to search for and procure at any cost, all MSS. of the works of antiquity within their reach. At the sack of Constantinople the Byzantine libraries were scattered in the general confusion; 120,000 MSS. are said to have disappeared.‡ Inasmuch, however, as these were mostly sold by the ignorant Turkish soldiery at a ridiculously small price, there is no reason to suppose they were lost to the world, and the fact that Cosmo and other collectors succeeded in gathering together so large a quantity of valuable MSS., may be supposed to be in some measure accounted for by the dispersion of the literary treasures of Constantinople. Cosmo's labours in this respect resulted in the foundation of the celebrated Laurentian Library at Florence; while the numbers of MSS. which found their way into Italy may be judged by the fact, that Nicolo Niccoli, a private citizen of Florence, collected no less than 800 volumes of Greek, Roman, and Oriental authors.

Nicholas V., Pope though he was, claims honourable remembrance in connection with the intellectual movement of the fifteenth century, which was to lead, combined with other causes, to the great rebellion against the Papacy in the succeeding age. His efforts in aid of learning, and those of Leo X., who also helped to provide the weapons which were directed against himself, led to the remark of Lord Bolingbroke, that the charm which had bound mankind for so many ages was broken by the magicians themselves. Nicholas V., whose civil name was Tomaso Calandrino, rose by his own abilities from the lower ranks of society; and in his earlier career was aided by the liberal patronage of Cosmo, who lived to see him ascend the Pontifical throne, and to rejoice at the opportunities thus gained for prosecuting their common object of aiding the restoration of learning in Italy. Had the in-

* See, for instance, Waddington's Hist. Church, chap. xvii.

† Literary Hist. Mid. Ages, book vi.

‡ Gibbon. Decline and Fall, chap. lxviii.

fluence of the Papacy always been exerted as it was by Nicholas, the Popes would have taken the front place as the benefactors of mankind. "From the ruins of the Byzantine libraries, from the darkest monasteries of Germany and Britain, he collected the dusty MSS. of the writers of antiquity, and wherever the original could not be removed, a faithful copy was transcribed and transmitted for his use. The Vatican, the old repository for bulls and legends, for superstition and forgery, was daily replenished with more precious furniture; and such was the industry of Nicholas, that in a reign of eight years he formed a library of 5000 volumes. To his munificence the Latin world was indebted for the versions of Xenophon, Diodorus, Polybius, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Appian; of Strabo's geography, of the Iliad, of the most valuable works of Plato and Aristotle, of Ptolemy and Theophrastus, and of the Fathers of the Greek Church." * The magnificent library of the Vatican at Rome, of which Nicholas was thus the founder, as also the library established in Florence by Cosmo, afforded great facilities to the new movement, and, but for the means thus afforded to the learned for becoming acquainted with the actual works of the ancients, the mere study of the Greek language would not have produced any perceptible effect on the intelligence and civilisation of Europe. We have now traced the principal causes, and have briefly noticed the chief actors, which took part in restoring to modern Europe a knowledge of the ancient Greek philosophy and learning; an event which in importance exceeds any other which occupies the pages of the historian, and but for which the course of European civilisation, must have been quite other than it has been.

There is no one nation of antiquity to which modern civilisation owes so much as to the Greeks. In all the practical relations of life modern humanity is their debtor to a very large extent. Logic, or the art of reasoning, the philosophy of government, rhetoric, and public oratory, all found their first exponents among the Greeks. They led the way in the natural sciences, although their method prevented them from making much progress in discovery. In the realm of ethics and moral philosophy, Socrates and Plato found no competitors in the ancient world. All that the Romans had of philosophy and practical science was borrowed from the Greeks; their merit was that they, being a more practical people, had less of the spirit of theorising. But it may be safely averred that whatever these modern ages owe to Rome, of any value, had its ultimate source in the effects wrought on the Roman civilisation by its contact with the Greeks. It is in this connection that we come upon the proof of what we have before stated, that Christianity was not the civilizing agency which produced the various benefits resulting from the progress of man. Greek thought and Greek literature were the motive causes in this matter, proved by the fact, that during all the centuries that they were unknown to Europe there was no progress, and directly they became known an era of enlightenment dawned upon Europe.

And why was this so? Christianity spoke not to the intellect, but to the soul of man; it therefore left the way open for the priest to degrade it into Priestcraft, and to impose that as Christianity on men, which was, in fact, Superstition—and not Christianity at all. Priests found their account in destroying all chance of an intellectual training for the people, and embraced the opportunity furnished by the influx of barbarianism into the Roman Empire.

* Gibbon. Decline and Fall, chap. lxvi.

The same desire to leave room for the growth of superstition, by preventing the education of the intellect, led to the closing of the Athenian Schools, by Justinian, under the advice of the priests of the Greek Church. Thus it came about, that during the Middle Ages both Christianity and Learning were destroyed by Priestcraft, and Superstition sat enthroned in a realm of ignorance, while mankind became the subjects of an intellectual and moral degradation unparalleled in any other part of the World's history. Over this Empire of Darkness the Church reigned supreme; and it was not until the intellect of man was roused, that the possibility of progress was achieved. This was done by the influence of the Greek thought and learning, in the way we have seen. One of the results of this was, that the way was to some extent opened for the resuscitation of Christianity; and it was only the old leaven of Priestcraft which mixed itself up with the Reformation, that prevented this from being more thoroughly accomplished.

It now becomes necessary to notice an event which, if it were not directly connected with the Revival of the Ancient Learning, at least made it productive of results in the modern era, which never attended it among the nations of antiquity—we speak of the Invention of Printing. While Italy took the foremost place in the Revival of Letters, to Germany the world is indebted for this invention. The coincidence of this discovery with the Italian movement was extremely fortunate, tending, as it did, to give the world, and that speedily, the full benefit of that movement. The facility and rapidity with which the results of the labours of the learned could now be diffused lent wings to their ardour; thousands of intellects were called into activity, which would otherwise have remained inactive; while the works of human thought and the literature of ancient times were multiplied so quickly, and so largely, that it remained impossible that what had been regained, and what was being daily added to the mental possessions of men, could ever again be lost. In connection with this invention, it should be remembered that that of Paper, which preceded it by about four centuries, was conducive to its full advantages being felt; without paper, printing would never have produced the fruits it did.

Thus do the various works and influences of ages, far apart, converge, as it were, into a focus, and create a new era,—a new starting point in the history of humanity. One proof, this, among the many which history affords, of the existence of those mighty God-given laws, which lie behind the development of human civilisation, the expression of which is that constant onward progress observable in the history of mankind, and the ultimate outcome whereof will be the perfect happiness of humanity, and the full development of all the faculties and capabilities of man. Italy was the first country, after Germany, to put to a practical use the new invention, and that so speedily that ere Cosmo died printing was in use there. The name of an Italian, Aldus, stands foremost as the earliest producer of the first printed editions of the Classics; and the art would have spread more rapidly than it did but for the jealousy of the early printers. The Invention of Printing was the crowning epoch of the Revival of Learning. It sowed broadcast among the nations the new literature and philosophy; by it the records of science and art, the beauties of poesy, all the varied productions of the intellect, became imperishable, and the light of knowledge was diffused far and wide. Knowledge no longer remained the exclusive possession of the few, but all were made participators of the blessing.

JAS. L. GOODING.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE SIKHS.

BY THE LATE CAPTAIN W. MURRAY.

(Continued from page 328.)

ON failure of brothers and nephews, the general practice is equal division of lands and personal effects amongst the surviving widows of the Manjhee Singhs.

Adoption by the widows is not allowed, and the female line is entirely excluded from the succession, to prevent the estates merging in the possessions of another family.

The inconvenience and evil originating in the prevailing practice amongst the Manjhee families of successive and minute subdivisions of landed property, aggravated by the system of coparcenary possession, are seen, felt, and acknowledged, and the mischief of such a system cannot be too soon remedied.

Amongst the Malwa Singhs, the rights of primogeniture in the males are respected, and jagheers, or grants of land, are assigned for the maintenance of younger sons, by which the many inconveniences, noticed in the practice or rules established amongst the Manjhee families, are obviated.

The Malwa Singhs, with exception to the Bhaees, sanction and admit the use of Kurawa, thereby opposing a bar to disputed succession between the brothers, nephews, and the widows, of a deceased chief.

The Bhaees of Khytul, and other places, although they reject the union by Kurawa, yet set aside the claims of a widow, in favour of the brothers and nephews, of one dying without male issue. The widows of Bhaees receive small jagheers for their support during life.

The Mahometan families scattered over the Sikh states, who have been enabled to preserve their existence and the shadow of power, reject the ordinances of their law-givers, and are guided by rules of their own forming. Were the Mahometan and Hindu laws on inheritance, as inculcated by the Shura and Metakshara, to be made the leading principle in succession to landed property, very few, if any, of the many principalities in India would remain entire, and a common distribution would become universal, to the extinction of great estates, and the annihilation of the chiefs with their aristocratical influence.

When the country, overrun by the Sikhs, had been parcelled out into new allotments, the former divisions into districts, as established during the reigns of the Delhi emperors, and recorded by the kanoongoes, or rule-tellers, became void, and much angry litigation arose in respect to the village boundaries and waste-lands. The cultivators originated the cause of dispute, and the effect was, in most cases, an appeal to arms, and an effusion of blood, before the claims of the parties could be heard and decided by a convention of neighbouring zumceendars, selected to draw a line of demarcation, and bound by a solemn oath to act impartially. The litigants made choice of an equal number of moonsiffs or arbitrators; in some cases one each, in others two to three each. These committees would prolong their sittings for weeks and months, being all the while fed and paid by the parties, caressed and threatened by their chiefs, their relatives and friends, influenced by party spirit, governed by fear, and little verifying the saying common amongst them of "Punch men Purnêsur." Five different modes of accommodation were in general adoption amongst these punchayts:—1st. An equal division of the land in dispute.—2nd. The punchayt selected the oldest and most respectable member of their committee to define the limit, the others consenting

to abide by his award.—3rd. A moiety of the line of demarcation was drawn by the arbitrators of the one party, and the remaining portion by those of the other.—4th. The punchayt referred the final adjustment to an old inhabitant of a neighbouring village, upon whose local knowledge and experience they placed more reliance than on their own limited information.—5th. It sometimes occurred to the punchayt to leave the division in the hands of one of the disputants, whose probity and reputation were established in the vicinity.

Village boundary disputes, attended with aggravating circumstances, between the chiefs and cultivators of contiguous and rival states, are of daily occurrence, and the right and title to the smallest slip of land is contested with an obstinacy quite disproportionate to its intrinsic value. Little attention is paid by the chiefs or their subjects to the justice or reasonableness of a case; it is quite sufficient, according to Sikh notions, that a claim be advanced and presented, as something may be obtained, and nothing can be lost, by the reference to a punchayt, which will use its endeavours to please, and harmonise its decision to the wants and wishes of those by whom it has been selected.

Bloodshed between zumeendars, in a boundary dispute, is sometimes atoned for by giving a nata, or daughter, in marriage to a relative of the deceased, or commuted to the payment of 150 to 200 rupees, or 125 beegahs of land. In general, however, revenge is sought, and the Khoon-buha, or price of blood, deemed insufficient satisfaction, particularly when a mother has to lament the loss of a favourite child, or a wife, with a family, the bereavement of a husband.

Claims to islands in a river flowing between two manors, and to alluvions, are determined by what is called the Kuchmuch, or Kishtee-bunna, which practice or rule assigns the land to the proprietor of the bank, or main upon which the alluvion is thrown, and from which the water has receded. If the island be formed in the centre of the river, and there be depth of water on each side of it sufficient for boats to ply, in this case it becomes the joint property of the chiefs on both banks. This custom, which obtains in the Sikh States, with regard to alluvion, is universal, so far as my knowledge in the local laws and usages of India has extended, wherever lands are liable to such accident by an alteration in the course of rivers. In the case of lands cast by the change of the stream from one side of the river to the other, though one chief gains and another loses, yet it is customary to preserve the rights of the zumeendar, if he consent to cultivate the lands. The decided enmity of two chiefs is seldom a bar to an arrangement, in which each finds or perceives an advantage to himself, either immediate or prospective; for streams in India are so subject to change, that the land lost one rainy season may be regained in the next, or even in the cold weather, when the river falls and the floods cease.

The use and abuse of the ancient privilege of the zumeendars in damming up, and turning the course of a stream into artificial kools, or cuts, for the purpose of irrigating the lands in its vicinity, causes disputes and bloodshed; and, after much angry dissension, the result is generally a compromise, stipulating for a reciprocal enjoyment of the gifts of Nature. In some instances, and in contiguous estates, the parties will agree to take equal shares of the water, either by the hour, or the day, or by-measurement; in other cases, one will receive two-thirds, and his neighbour one-third only, according to their respective and pressing wants. The landholders, whose

possessions are adjacent to the hills, from which and their base these streams and springs take their rise, require and demand a very large portion of the water for their rice-lands, into which it is diverted by numberless water-courses, drawn with great ingenuity by the cultivators into distant and countless parterres. Those who hold land at a distance, and lower down the river, in the more arid districts, are querulous that the streams do not flow unobstructed in their natural courses, which would give them the unabsorbed portion to irrigate their wheat and barley crops.

It seems to be a question how far a chief may be justified in entirely obstructing the course of a natural stream, and in appropriating the waters to his own exclusive advantage, to the serious detriment and loss of his neighbours, whose rights he may seem bound to respect, so far as they have relation to property. On the whole, it appears most just that all should partake, as far as circumstances will admit, of a share in the water of a natural stream or rivulet; and that, when the absolute wants of those on the upper part of the stream have been supplied, the surplus should be again turned into, and permitted to flow in, its bed, to satisfy others lower down, whether for irrigation, or the consumption of the people and cattle in the arid districts. The lesser currents do not swell in the hot months, as is the case with the larger rivers which debouch from the Himalaya, and are fed in warm weather by the liquefaction of the snow: the supply of water in them is hence often so scanty, as scarcely to administer to the necessities of those near their heads; whilst the distress of others, farther down the stream, induces them to become more clamorous as the quantity decreases, and ultimately stops short of them.

(To be continued.)

THE SEPTUAGINT.

BY PARKER AND DE WITTE.

ACCORDING to a statement in a pretended letter by Aristæas, repeated by Josephus, and extended still farther by later writers, the version of the Mosaic Law was made by seventy-two Palestine Jews, learned in the Scripture; it was made at the instance of Demetrius Phalereus, under the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, to aid in forming a universal collection of laws.

The story related by the pseudo-Aristæas is this: Demetrius Phalereus, the keeper of the Alexandrian library, wished to make a collection of all the books in the world, and mentioned the Jewish works to King Ptolemy, who promised to write to the high priest at Jerusalem for interpreters to translate those books into the Greek tongue. Aristæas happened to be present, and advised the king to set free the large number of Hebrews then held as slaves in his dominions. He did this, and sent a messenger to Eleazar, the high priest, at Jerusalem, for six learned men out of each tribe, to serve as translators of the Law. A letter and costly presents were sent. Aristæas, the pretended writer of this tale, and Andreas, were sent as messengers. Eleazar returned a courteous answer, and sent the seventy-two translators requested; "all picked men." Ptolemy was much rejoiced to see them. He entertained them for seven days at his own table, in a most splendid manner, and asked them seventy-two questions respecting the kingly office, and the best way of governing a state. To all these queries the individuals returned the most satisfactory replies. Demetrius then conducted them to a quiet place, on the Island of Pharos, where they commenced their work; and in seventy-two days the whole was completed. It was copied carefully by Demetrius himself, and read to a large audience, who stood and listened out of respect to the Sacred Books; a curse was then pronounced upon all who should add to or diminish it. Ptolemy dismissed the translators with praises and rewards.

It is now generally acknowledged that this story is a fable. It is surprising that critics like Ussher, Vossius, and Walton, should ever have believed it genuine; for, not to mention its general absurdity—which would only enhance its value in some eyes—it bears obvious marks of its forgery. It contradicts the account of Demetrius, as given by Hermippas, in Diogenes Laertius. Aristeas professes to be a heathen in this story, and yet writes as a Jew. There were six translators for each tribe, but the ten tribes had perished long before. It was not probable that a man like Demetrius Phalereus should serve as a scribe to a company of Jewish translators; much less that he, whom Cicero calls “a most accomplished orator,” would write a letter in such execrable Greek as this which pretends to come from him; nor is it less improbable that Ptolemy should expend so large a sum in purchasing the freedom of the Hebrew slaves, and sending presents to Jerusalem, solely for the sake of getting a copy of the Law of Moses in the Greek tongue.

The argument for the genuineness of this document rests chiefly on the testimony of Josephus and Epiphanius, both of whom cite the original of Aristeas, but both, and particularly the latter, have altered the text: and, besides, they wrote so long after the alleged date of the original, that their testimony has no authority to determine the point. The passage in Eusebius is of little value. “Before the time of Demetrius Phalereus, before the dominion of Alexander and the Persians, part of our holy books were translated, namely, those which relate the departure of our Hebrew nation out of Egypt, and an account of all the wonderful things that happened to them—the conquest of the land, and the reception of the Law. But the whole translation of all that relates to the Law was made under Ptolemy Philadelphus—Demetrius Phalereus taking charge of the whole matter.”

It seems probable that this fable of Aristeas was written by a Palestine Jew, who wished to exalt the honour of the Law, and of his native land. But his fiction is so clumsily executed that the imposture is seen through on all sides. Philo, an Egyptian Jew, knew nothing of this treatise; but Josephus cites it as well known and authentic.

It is possible that this fable may contain somewhat that is true respecting the occasion and date of this version; but, in the main point, that learned Palestine Jews were its authors, it is refuted by the character of the version itself. This remains the most certain, that it was made by Alexandrian Jews, who were induced to undertake it by the want of such a version.

Eichhorn indulges in the following account of the origin of this version, which, in the midst of many conjectures, may contain much that is true. After the death of Alexander the Great, the Jews whom he had conducted to Egypt remained there in great numbers, especially in Alexandria. They enjoyed their ancient usages and laws. They had synagogues, and probably a Sanhedrim. A knowledge of Hebrew was soon lost, and a version in the vernacular tongue became needed. Both the Jews and the Samaritans claim the honour of making the translation. But, at this distance of time, it is not possible to determine, by historical testimony, which party effected what both desired to accomplish. However, since the Jews and the Samaritans had such a cordial hatred for one another at that time, it is plain each party would only translate from its own manuscripts of the Scriptures. Now the Alexandrian version of the Pentateuch agrees with the Samaritan copy, in a multitude of passages, much better than with the Hebrew. From this and other considerations, it would seem most probable that a Samaritan manuscript was at the basis of the version. But, on the other hand, there are passages which agree with the Hebrew, but not with the Samaritan. It is the conjecture of some scholars, that the version was originally made by Samaritans, and afterwards partially corrected by the Jews. Perhaps it was revised and improved by the Egyptian Sanhedrim, of seventy-two members, and thus a foundation laid for the story of Aristeas.

But this is purely conjecture; and, besides, the agreement between this version and the Samaritan codex, where it has peculiar readings, is not so striking or im-

portant as Eichorn alleges, and may be accounted for on the hypothesis that the ancient Hebrew text, from which this Greek version was made, was free from some of the errors of the present Hebrew text, which are not found in the Samaritan codex at this day.

Ptolemy Soter made a large collection of Greek books at Alexandria; his successor, Philadelphus, enlarged it. From the epilogue to the Greek version of Esther, we see that it was made in the time of Ptolemy Philomater: and, from this fact, it seems probable the other books were already in the hands of the Ptolemies. Plutarch relates that Demetrius Phalereus had advised Ptolemy Soter to make a collection of all the writings of law-givers and statesmen, of course including the works of Moses. This is confirmed by the testimony of Ælian, who says, Demetrius, in company with Ptolemy, worked upon a code of laws for the Egyptians. He would naturally apply to the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem or Egypt for a copy of these laws. Now, if there were a translation already made, it would probably come into his hands; but, if there were none, the Sanhedrim would probably permit one to be made, or appoint competent men to make it. The version might well enough be called that of the seventy, or of the seventy-two, the number of members in the Sanhedrim. This conjecture is, in some measure, confirmed by the statement of the Talmud, that five Jews were appointed to collect the fragmentary versions of the Law into one whole, to revise and complete the work. This was, perhaps, begun under Ptolemy Soter, and completed under Philadelphus.

On the authority of some ancient writers—of Clement, Irenæus, and Eusebius, who date this version from the time of Ptolemy Soter—Hody places it in the joint administration of Ptolemy Soter and Philadelphus, about 286 or 285 B.C.

The opinion that there was an earlier fragmentary version,—made for the use of the synagogues,—which lay at the basis of the new version, is highly probable. According to the story of Aristobulus, there was a Greek version of the Pentateuch before the time of the Persians. One writer thinks it was made in the time of Amasis, contemporary with Solon; another declares it is older than Homer and Hesiod; “for they drew from the Jewish Scriptures.” Aristobulus, however, as well as later writers, had a special interest in proving the Greek philosophers were indebted to the Jews for all their divine wisdom, and therefore invents the fable. But this original version was unknown to Josephus, Philo, or even Aristeas. Walton cites the authorities who believe in the earlier version. But most of them rely chiefly on the authority of Aristobulus, or adopt this opinion to account for the “divine wisdom” of the Greeks. Walton himself thinks the Seventy made the earliest version; but still there is good reason to believe in the existence of a previous fragmentary translation.

There is a fabulous story in Abul Phatach's Samaritan Chronicle respecting the Alexandrian version, as follows: “In the tenth year of his reign, Ptolemy Philadelphus directed his attention to the contradictions between the Samaritans and the Jews respecting the Law; for the Samaritans refused to receive any of the pretended writings of the prophets, except the Law. To inform himself on this point, the king sent for the Jews and the Samaritans, and desired to hear the elders of both parties in this controversy. Osar came to Alexandria on the part of the Jews, Aaron on that of the Samaritans, each attended with several assistants. Quarters were assigned them, with directions to remain separate from one another; a Greek servant was appointed to each person, to write down the expected translation. In this way the Samaritans translated the Law and the other books. Ptolemy examined it, and was satisfied that the Law, as the Samaritans possessed it, contained matter not to found in the Jewish copy, and that their text was purer than that of the Jews.” The Samaritans say the world was darkened for three days after the version was made.

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OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER .XXIV.

THE RECTOR ATTENDING MANY SERVICES.

ALTHOUGH, as the reader is aware, the visit of Lester to London was suddenly resolved upon, still it is not to be overlooked that he had long desired an opportunity of hearing the great metropolitan preachers, partly with the view of learning how it was they managed to influence their congregations, to the extent attributed to them in the religious journals, and partly to have his growing doubts dispelled. It had occurred to him that the great divines of the age would be able to render clear and satisfactory reasons for remaining in the Church. Lately, it frequently happened at Crosswood, that strange ministers, visiting in the neighbourhood, occupied his own and other pulpits, and when he was not officiating he invariably attended their services—devoutly listening and eagerly attending to their arguments; but none of them satisfied his cravings, or came up to his standard of excellence. Neither as readers, thinkers, nor orators, did they meet his demands; but the idea was constantly present to his mind, that, if he could but spend one month in London, to attend the leading churches, or even chapels, for he had no clerical pride or narrowness, he should not fail to hear men who would surpass all that he imagined possible. And now that the favourable moment had arrived, although his hopes had been crushed, and his heart was wracked by the threatened loss of Mary, he was delighted by the nearness of the realisation of his wishes. Probably he hoped to be reconverted—hoped to be convinced by the eloquent ones that his new ideas were false, and that those which he was fast abandoning were alone worthy of credit. His heart still clung to the thought that Mary would be his, and yet he neither hoped that she would marry him as a sceptic, nor dreamt of pretending to believe those narratives and doctrines which his reason did not approve. In a brief interview with Ella, before leaving; he had said,

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES. VOL. II.

2 A

"I shall never disguise the sorrow I feel, or attempt to deny my real feelings, still, I shall not give way to mourning, neither shall I hate the world for my failure, yet if I can find my way back to the old faith I shall gladly do so, and then claim my bride; but if that cannot be honourably done, then I shall give up all thoughts of marrying, and devote myself to such works as will contribute to the happiness of others. I will not waste my days in vain regrets, neither will I have to answer at the great inquest, that because I had been wronged I neglected to perform my duty unto others."

Ella heard this with mingled feelings, for she knew that although the fires of grief were not seen burning, they were not extinguished. Lester had spoken firmly, almost calmly, but, as was usual with him, he felt within what could not be expressed in words, and she, who had studied him so closely, was not deceived by the seeming coolness with which he made known his plans.

To Barrington he said nothing of what had so recently occurred, so that all along the road they conversed as freely as it was their custom to do, but when at length, late the next day, they reached the great city, Lester was too much exhausted, both in mind and body, to take that walk through the leading thoroughfares which had been agreed upon. The day following he was so weak and feverish that medical aid was sought; it was, however, not within the reach of science to furnish the healing balm. That was supplied by himself, for with the flight of the hours he gradually acquired a complete mastery over his feelings, and on the third day he was sufficiently "recovered" to be able to go forth upon a rambling expedition.

The business which had drawn Barrington to London was likely to detain him not less than three weeks, yet it did not exhaust much of his time, seeing that on the average he gave only about one hour a day to the lawyer. Thus the two friends were free to visit all the remarkable sights, scenes, and public buildings, and, upon condition that Lester would pay a few visits to the Opera and a leading theatre, Barrington consented to be his companion in visiting those Churches and Chapels in which shone the great lights of the modern pulpit. This matter being settled, it was decided that on the following morning they should repair to a church in the city where a popular preacher was to preach a Charity Sermon. The church was already full when they arrived, but, by means of a piece of silver, they were introduced to a seat near the communion rails, where they managed to live through the painful infliction of listening to the Morning Service, which was read in a galloping style that baffles description. After this the preacher, a young and fine manly looking person, ascended the pulpit, to preach from the text, "Charity hideth a multitude of sins." There was almost a commotion in the building, for he who stood before the congregation was not the "popular man;" that gentleman, through a throat affection, was unable to preach, but when the announcement was made there was a great rustling of silk, and many half-rose, as if it was their intention to leave. In this they were checked by the speaker, who, in a mild but firm voice, added, "Remembering that this is the house of God, and not an exhibition; and remembering, also, that the aim of this service is to move your hearts in favour of a deserving charity, you will retain your seats, while I invite your attention to the text, and endeavour to show how it is that Charity covereth so many of our sins." He was so evidently in earnest that all stayed, and although the sermon was neither brilliantly composed, nor theatrically delivered, it was one of the finest that had been delivered in a London pulpit for many years past. In one portion of his discourse the preacher said,

"Do not be too ready to describe your actions, your subscriptions, or your donations, as charitable. Men frequently confound a just payment to the poor and distressed with what they call 'a loan to the Lord.' Be sure that you have previously done your duty unto men before boasting of what you have given them in charity. Rich men imagine that all the money they annually subscribe to hospitals and reformatories is so much lent unto God, the sum total of which is to cover a multitude of their miserable sins in unfair bargaining, short-weight, and starvation wages. Brethren, be not ye thus far deceived. If you would know the truth, first ask yourselves if the poor who delve and spin, who fight and build, have been properly compensated for their labour. Do you, when bargaining with a workman, consider the amount he ought to have, or the sum for which you can get the job done by another workman? If the latter be your law, and I am sure it is, then the former must be evaded, and you are strictly in debt to those persons in the amounts thus reduced from their wages. How often have you discharged one man, unto whom you paid, say, one pound a week, to take on another, 'purely out of charity,' who would do the work for fifteen shillings? How frequently have you employed a poor man to do five shillings' worth of work for half-a-crown? This, too, you considered to be charitable, and treated the man as if you were his benefactor. But what tyranny can be greater than that of making the hunger and poverty of men the means of their depression and slavery? He who looks upon the wan face and tattered garments, upon the hunger-marked countenance and poor thin frame, as furnishing a reason for paying something more than the usual price may, without blushing, think of being charitable, but such persons are unhappily too rare, for, as a rule, men make a profit out of the misery of their fellow mortals. Let the poor be properly remunerated and there will not be half the claims upon our charity which are now so eagerly pressed. And can any of us honestly say that they who create all our means of comfort are fairly rewarded? Have we deserved to possess them? What is it that we have done which justifies us in laying claim to the clothing, shelter, and food, which is ours, and from which they who produced them are shut out? If to-day I press you to give largely of your private stores, it is not that you may be able to walk the streets proudly saying, 'Behold, I have generously given medicine and food to the afflicted,' but that you should have less cause to be ashamed when you see the poor and needy, and remember how much of theirs you wrongfully retain. It is justice and restitution for which I plead, and they have little to do with that charity which is to cover so many of our sins."

What that charity consisted of the preacher did not fail to show, but it was evident, as he proceeded, that his discourse was displeasing to the majority. And when the people were going out, a dean-hatted divine, bidding farewell to some carriage friends, said, "Ah! all that about justice, charity, and restitution, will not help him on in the Church."

"No," said Barrington, loudly; "for nowadays the Church rewards dumb dogs and dandies, not earnest and honest men."

Lester was astonished at his companion's breach of etiquette, and yet admiring it, he said, "I should like to know that man; for, of all that I have heard, he is the master both of matter and manner."

"Yes," said Barrington, "and, if you remain twenty years in London, I feel sure you will not meet with his equal."

"But we can hear him again, there is that consolation."

"Don't make too sure of that; he is not the man who is likely to be

invited to 'supply' London pulpits. The select church-goers are not partial to discourses of such a nature, and I doubt if he will get another invitation. His prospects have been blighted by this day's work ; for, in depriving his hearers of the consolation of thinking themselves to be charitable when they give a few shillings to the poor, he has beggared their exchequer of good works, and, following the rule, they will hate him accordingly. But on Sunday we are to hear the man we have missed to-day, and then, in the evening, we shall hear the great Dissenting minister ; so that, although highly delighted with this specimen of modern preachers, I am in hopes we shall hear a discourse equally or even more satisfactory."

The following day was devoted to the sights to which country cousins are always directed, but on the Sunday morning they were early at the church where the popular man was to be heard.

It was full to overflowing, and the congregation was evidently wealthy. Such a magnificent show of bonnets and satins had not been got together without an "immense expenditure ;" and they who wore them were proud of their costly burdens. Lester had heard that it was "a fashionably-attended church," but was not prepared for such a glorious show of millinery and costly jewel-work. During the time that elapsed between their entrance and the beginning of the service, he was calculating the probable per centage of pious persons who were present ; not that, as a rule, he was either morose or given to depreciation, but the arrogant airs of many compelled him to question their religious sincerity. A noble-looking couple swept down the aisles, followed by a liveried attendant, bearing their gold and morocco-bound books ; they had come to stand before their God, and, while declaring themselves to be miserable sinners, to declare that, before the Everlasting, all men were equal, but it was impossible to witness the air of insolent hauteur with which they treated their lacquey, without feeling that pride of wealth and rank was their all-engrossing passion. They were content with confessing their sins, and seemed to be in no humour for abandoning the greatest of all.

Lester felt sick at heart, as the conviction gradually stole over him that he was taking part in a mere show, nor could he avoid thinking it a sad mockery of worship when so much dressing and embellishing was considered necessary to its perfection. He thought of his own quiet church, which, with all its drawbacks, was, at least, attended by scores who laboured to live in love with both God and man—people who came to the service with some portion of humility, and who moved through the church with a degree of reverential awe.

A buzz of admiration ran through the congregation when the favourite ascended the reading-desk, for all loved to hear him read. Neither could they avoid admiring his elegant appearance, especially his piercing black eyes, which, in their glances, said more than volumes would contain. He was well got up for the occasion—completely dressed for the part which none knew better how to perform. It was quite natural for him to be a favourite reader, for the entire performance was complete as a work of art. The reader had carefully studied every point, and knew where the hits were to be made. His reading of the Ten Commandments was especially fine, and the contempt thrown into the last word of the sixth,—"*Thou shalt not steal,*" was unequalled. So, also, was his reading of the Old Testament Lesson ; for, instead of being merely run through at the schoolboy rate, so common in our churches, it was delivered with startling effect, so much so that it appeared as if the whole scene were being played before the auditors. But, withal, it was impossible to avoid feeling that, when even the best had been said, it

was but a play. The feeling was theatrical; the passion, so finely poured, was of the boards; and it occurred to the minds of many besides the two friends that he who played the leading part had mistaken his vocation.

This was rendered even more clear when he was preaching the sermon; for, from beginning to end, it was a gross plagiarism: it was splendidly recited or declaimed, but it was stolen. The subject was of that class that are sufficiently thrilling to stir the hearts, and inspire with eloquence, the poorest of preachers—it was a sort of funereal discourse upon Sir Henry Havelock, the sad news of whose death—death almost in the arms of victory—had just reached our shores, and they who maintained alive in their hearts the love of patience, perseverance, and unconquerable firmness of purpose; they who knew his pure character, who admired his moral greatness, equally with his noble valour as a soldier, naturally expected that the clergy would perform their parts in doing full honour to his memory by pouring forth discourses which would fairly embody admiration of his life's labours, conjoined with our national sorrow for a loss, in every sense, so lamentable. In that church, too, notwithstanding the rank, pride, and hollowness of heart, collected together, there were men and women who were really anxious to hear a generous lament for the dead, and, to some extent, they were not disappointed. Still, the sermon was powerless, for it lacked fire and nobleness of purpose. There was no heart in the matter. It was a compound of beautiful thoughts, of exquisite similes, and of generous sentiments, all of which were beautifully wrought; but without one grain of that material which would have made it subdue all hearts. Like a glittering iceberg, or a travelling waterspout, it was very grand to contemplate, but not to come in contact with. It pleased the artistic taste, but failed with the heart; so that, when Lester was out in the street again, and was endeavouring to describe his feelings, he said, "I have been highly pleased, and intensely disgusted," but it would be impossible to say which feeling predominated.

"And I," said Barrington, "have been both amused and astonished. The man is a fine actor, but, like all who merely perform a part, he depends solely upon others to supply him with the materials of which he stands in need. That sermon has been stolen from the works of Orville Dewey, an American Unitarian preacher. In his volume, it is called 'Voices of the Dead,'—that is the name of the discourse, which is a marvellously beautiful and thoughtful one; and this great popular pulpiteer has actually taken entire paragraphs, with all the finest ideas, out of others, to make up his Havelock oration.* That is what I call downright thieving; but the chief members of his congregation are not likely to find him out, and so, for a time, he will go on to play his part, and win others over to acting as he is doing. He denounces the Unitarians, but steals their sermons."

"And this," said Lester, "is what is called great preaching—popular pulpit oratory! I have before heard that he has largely used, or, in fact, that he has dished up many passages out of the, so-called, 'Infidel work,' known as 'Greg's Creed of Christendom;' now I find him stealing the thoughts, and nearly all the discourse, of a Socinian. Surely there must be some delusion in this matter."

Lester spoke like a man who has lost all guidance, but, recovering himself, he observed that the popular man they were to hear in the evening would doubtless compensate them for their annoyance and loss of time. This was

* He has since published it in the three-volume edition of his sermons, and in that he gives it as his own, without any allusion to Dewey. (*Printer's Devil*)

the hope which filled his breast, while pushing his way through the full thoroughfares towards a bridge, over which the friends passed, in search of the Great New Light.

When, after a deal of enquiring and losing their way, these two at length entered the crowded chapel, the preacher had already given out his text, and was advancing rapidly with his exordium, the style and language of which struck Lester as being particularly loose and coarse, almost profane. It was marked by a curious mingling of that species of low jesting buffoonery, so commonly exhibited in front of the strolling players' booths, erected in a country fair, with sentences culled from the sermons of Puritan Divines, the authors of which would be strangely moved, were they to return to earth, to find their best thoughts married to such disgusting witticisms. As the preacher advanced with his subject, he launched out against "those milk and water ministers who are afraid to talk about hell and brimstone in their pulpits." He was subject to no such weakness, but felt proud of maintaining that "hell with its never-dying fires, and heaven, with its never-cloying sweets," were great realities, the latter of which would be his portion. In the second section of his discourse, he declared that his place in heaven was perfectly secure, and he went on to say: "See, you miserable sinner, see! here stands a redeemed, saved, glorified man; see, and vainly will you gnash your teeth. . . . Soon this voice will never be strained again; soon these lungs will never have to exert themselves beyond their power; soon this brain shall not be racked for thought; but I shall sit at the banquet table of God—yes I shall recline on the bosom of Abraham, and be at ease for ever—

"I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given:
More happy but not more secure,
Are the glorified spirits in heaven."

At this point, pale and agitated, Lester started up, motioning Barrington to leave the place, but it was not until they were near the door that he assigned his reason for this rapid movement; the impossibility of his sitting to listen to a man who so arrogantly presumed to be in the secrets of heaven. "I feel," he continued, "that he is either a great hypocrite or one of the most unfeeling wretches to be found upon the face of the earth. If there be the hell which he speaks of, and if it be true that millions of our fellow men will be confined in its everlasting fires, then the fact is so fearful that no man of feeling could allude to it without being overwhelmed with tears. If we knew that in yonder house there were human beings burning to death, not only would the knowledge wring our hearts, but it would compel us to risk our lives in order to save theirs. We could not hear them shrieking for assistance, and not lend it; I verily believe that the memory of their piteous cries would never be absent from our memories. But this man speaks of 'eternal burning' in the rollicking spirit of a jester—he actually makes a mock of damnation, and flings his jokes at the head of the condemned. Surely, but perhaps unconsciously, he is either playing a part, or he is more unfeeling than the rudest navigator who ever carried a spade. And then, too, his talk about 'his place in heaven.'"

"Heaven," said Barrington, "why how could there be any pleasure if such a fellow were there? To himself there can be no heaven, for his eternity will be spent in sorrowing over the fact that there is no hell of fire to receive those whom he has so unceremoniously doomed. His mind is of the

lowest sensual type; for he has no conception of pain which is not physical, or of pleasure which does not appeal to the senses. And the worst hell I can think of is the being doomed to spend an eternity with him as a companion. A beggar on horseback is an old figure, but this is a theological beggar riding a worn-out idea, and he knows neither his own weakness nor the absurdity of which he is guilty. I cannot conceive the popular heaven and hell; for the great body of believers say that Henry the Eighth, Charles the First, and the Mannings, as men who died in the faith, will be in this place of bliss, while Shakspeare, as 'the unregenerate play actor,' Priestly, as the 'Socinian unbeliever,' and Shelley, as 'the Atheistic poet,' are to be in the place of torment. They send all the best company into the worst places, and preserve all those who have double chins, cracked voices, and no poetry in their souls, for the place of bliss."

Walking and talking they reached a large open space, wherein was gathered several groups of men and women, all of whom were listening to speakers, who, in the centre of each group, were discussing religious topics, and preaching their own peculiar doctrines. At first they paused to hear a Catholic arguing with a Protestant about transubstantiation, and the latter was vehemently maintaining that as the doctrine was against reason it ought not to be believed. In the next group a Bible Christian was debating with an Irishman, who, either in fun, or because he had adopted the faith of Mahomet, was defending the Koran. The former had read Sale's translation, and was particularly dexterous in selecting questionable passages, but the Irishman always hit upon some passage in the Old Testament equally questionable, and argued that if he was to be led by his reason to reject one he must reject both, which the Bible Christian very illogically denied. In the next group a man was preaching about the end of the world, which he had fixed to happen within a few months; they who stood to listen were evidently amused, and burst into a roar of laughter, when a costermonger taking a short black pipe from his mouth, said, "There now, old fellow, stand a pint o' dog's-nose, and don't go on in that way; don't, you'll give us the grupp! And, if the world's a round un, round as a turnip, how is you agoin' to find a hend?" In the next group, a very respectable-looking man was exhorting his hearers to flee from the wrath to come; he was narrating many very old anecdotes of conversions, as if they had occurred under his own ministry; but, while telling the story of a converted navigator, he halted, and fell into contradictions, which called forth some jeerings. Lester was annoyed by the speaker's flippancy, and half-satisfied that he dealt in white lies, still he was vexed by the noisy jeering of one who stood by his side. "Hush," said Lester to him, "pray, Sir, hush. Do the man justice; at least he means well."

"No, he don't," growled the man.

"Why, then, does he come here to speak, amid so many difficulties?"

"Why for a pound a week, o' course," answered the man, "and he wouldn't come for any less. I knows all them chaps, and a good thing they makes of it. The people as pays 'em had better give the money to the poor folks, for there would be some good got out of it then; but now all we get is humbug, and a few coals when we pretends to be pious. But they aint goin' to humbug me."

Lester felt that it was likely there was much truth in this view of the matter, and, without further remark, took his friend's arm, and walked away sadly; wondering much at the specimens he had seen of the "religious" world of London.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XLVIII.

INFLUENCE OF THE PLATONIC PHILOSOPHY.

As we have fully shown in an earlier paper, the first awakening of the European intellect from the long lethargy of ages was owing to the introduction of Aristotle's logic and the growth of Scholasticism. Thus the first dawn of light on Europe, derived from Arab sources, was modified in its expression and development by the Greek intellect. These first feeble rays of light were, however, insufficient wholly to dispel the thick darkness which the Church had brought down on Europe; and Scholasticism was the result of a compromise between theology and reason. The Church baptised Aristotle, and sought to employ logic in proving the unprovable propositions which she imposed upon men as articles of belief. The necessity to do this was, however, in itself, a sign of progress—a sign that at least a show of reason was now demanded for what formerly authority alone had been competent to enforce; that at least was what must be stated of Scholasticism in its commencement. It was, after all, however, but a “show of reason,” and we have shown that the more earnest and honest minds amongst the men of the Ages of Scholasticism fled from the conclusions of their intellect into a peculiar mysticism, while others, less honestly, sought to compromise matters by setting forth the doctrine that that which was philosophically true might be theologically false.

On the one hand, therefore, there grew up the contest between reason and authority, predisposing all enquiring minds to a reformatory and progressive movement. But, on the other hand, the authority of Aristotle had, under the patronage of the Church, become so powerful as to oppose a limit to enquiry. The result was, that, ere long, the boldest thinkers of the Scholastic era bent humbly before this, and to doubt or question aught that Aristotle said, or to refuse to accept the logical inferences deduced from his postulates, was a thing which every one, who would not be accounted an atheist or a madman, looked upon as, or at least acknowledged to be, impossible. Scholasticism was therefore only a preparatory stage in the progress of thought; there was a limit beyond which it could not pass. In order, therefore, to open the way for further progress, and to prepare a wider field for the exercise of the human intellect, it was necessary that men's minds should be liberated from the fetters which Aristotle's authority had placed upon them. This was the service rendered to mankind by the Revival of the Platonic Philosophy. By dividing the attention of the learned, this new philosophy deprived the doctrines of Aristotle of that servile respect and veneration which had so long been paid to them; and by introducing the discussion of new subjects, it prepared the way for the pursuit of truths more properly within the sphere of the human intellect. Thus the introduction of the Platonic doctrines became of essential service to the cause of free enquiry and substantial knowledge.*

It was, however, in its influence on the grave and thoughtful mind of Germany, that the Platonic Philosophy produced its widest, most lasting, and most beneficial effects, not alone on the intellectual pursuits, but also on the manners and morals of the age. This consideration leads us to a matter to which it is necessary to draw our readers' attention—the different spirit of the Germans and the Italians in the cultivation of the ancient philosophy, and the consequently different results produced in their several countries by the

* See, on this subject, Roscoe, *Life of Lorenzo de' Med.*, chaps. i. and vii.

Revival of Letters, and the liberation of thought effected thereby. Germany became the Land of the Reformation. The Reformation in Italy was nipped in the bud. These two facts are explained in a great measure (although not wholly) by the different mental constitution of the two peoples. As we have seen in our review of the fifteenth century, and the influences at work in Germany, there was a wide-spread and deep-seated movement of the German mind, finding its expression in Mysticism and other ways. It is not therefore to be considered remarkable that the Revival of Letters and the Invention of Printing should have borne their fruits there, in connection with that movement, and should have hastened the impending downfall of the power and authority of the Church and Priesthood. In Germany the Revival of Learning became, in fact, a moral as well as a mental movement.

In Italy the case was different; there the new movement preserved the character of a purely intellectual revolution. Moreover, it remained mainly an aristocratic movement, and was pursued in the spirit of *dilletantism*. The Church and the aristocracy were so bound together, the alliance of the priesthood and the governments was so close, that the interests of the class who were mostly affected by the Revival of Learning were against allowing it to bear similar fruit in Italy to that produced by it in Germany. Of course the increased activity of intellect thereby caused, necessarily produced doubt and disbelief of the superstitions taught by the Church as religion; leading, however, rather to Atheism, than to a religious Reformation. The perceptions and the interests of the learned class in Italy were at variance, and so they were content to secretly sneer at the Church, and to leave things as they were. This state of things was illustrated in the career of Savonarola. The Religious Reformer stood in opposition to the chief representative of letters and learning, in the persons of Savonarola and Lorenzo de' Medici. Another suggestive fact, illustrative of the different spirit of the Italians and Germans in this matter, is, that classicity and paganism became the fashion among the Italian literati, while the scholarship of Germany was all pressed into the service of the Reformation. The Italians read and criticised Plato; the Germans read and revered him.

Of course it is not to be supposed that the Church would look calmly on at this movement. To attack Aristotle was to attack the Church. During the Pontificate of Paul II., about the year 1470, the spirit of the Church in this matter was exhibited by a cruel and unrelenting persecution set on foot by that Pontiff against letters and science at Rome, but in which their professors exhibited a degree of constancy and resolution in suffering which entitles them to our greatest respect. This persecution was directed against all the men of learning who, during the reign of Paul, made Rome their residence. Those who were so unfortunate as to fall into his hands he committed to prison, where he caused them to be submitted to torture, in order to draw from them a confession of crimes which had no existence, and of heretical opinions which they had never avowed. Not being able to obtain any evidence of their guilt, and finding that they had resolution to suffer the last extremity rather than accuse themselves, Paul thought proper at length to acquit them of the charge, but, at the same time, by a wanton abuse of power, he ordered that they should be detained in prison during a complete year from the time of their commitment.* Imprisonment and torture—such are the arguments Priestcraft uses to convince men of the error of their ways.

The wider the movement spread, the more the Church got alarmed.

* Roscoe. Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, chap. iii. Murat. Ann. ix. 508.

Greek was branded as heretical, and polite letters in general were denounced. The Priesthood made common cause with Scholasticism, and the Platonists were persecuted as "preachers of perversion," and "winnowers of the Devil's chaff." The biographies of all the scholars who first sought by public instruction to disseminate a knowledge of the ancient learning, are full of the proofs of the spirit of ill-will towards it which was now spread abroad in the Universities, and everywhere that the influence of the Church could make itself apparent. They exhibit "little else than a series of wanderings and persecutions—abandoning one university only, in general, to be ejected from another." The great University of Cologne stood proudly eminent in its hostility to the new intelligence; for improvement was there opposed by the united influence of the monks and masters. The faculties of Cologne remonstrated against the introduction of "Pagan" authors into the course of juvenile instruction, and oppressed the teachers as dangerous innovators, who corrupted the minds of youth by mythological fancies, and the study of unchristian authors. The Greek, however, was liberally treated compared with the first attempts to revive a study of Hebrew.*

If to Italy is due the honour of reviving the study of Greek, to Germany is owing the revival of that of Hebrew; a less, infinitely less, important matter, so far as human progress in general is concerned, but having a close connection with the Reformation. The study of Hebrew was peculiarly obnoxious to the Church, because it tended to unseal the mysterious records contained in the Bible, to which Priestcraft had hitherto been able to appeal without fear of any one questioning the correctness of the appeal. The name of John Reuchlin, a native of Pforzheim, and the most eminent among the scholars of that time, stands prominently forward in this connection, and Cologne was the scene of the priestly opposition. It was imagined that Hebrew literature, and the influence of Reuchlin, could not be more effectually suppressed than by rendering both the objects of religious suspicion. In this attempt the theologians of Cologne found an appropriate instrument in John Pfefferkorn, an apostate Jew, who had embraced "Christianity" to escape the punishment which his crimes had merited at the hands of his own race. He had written, or had, at least, allowed to be published under his name, four treatises (three in Latin, and one in German), the scope of which was to represent the Jewish religion in the most odious light. This man was, therefore, a fit agent for the Church to employ in this matter.

An edict was obtained from the Emperor, commanding that all Hebrew books (excepting the Bible, which doubtless the priestly party would have gladly included, could they have done so safely) should be searched for, and burned, throughout the Empire, on the ground that Jewish literature was nothing but a stock of libels on the character of Christ and Christianity. The cultivation of Hebrew learning would thus they thought be rendered impossible, or would, at least, be discouraged. The execution of this decree was ultimately suspended by the representations of Reuchlin, who showed that to extirpate Hebrew literature in the mass, was not only unjust, but inexpedient; that a large number of the Rabbinic writings were not of a theological character at all, and consisted of books not only innocent but highly useful; and that the religious books themselves were not, in fact, such as they had been malevolently represented. By this he earned the hatred of the priestly party, who sought to throw on him the odium of favouring the Jews. They

* See an Article on the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* in the *Edin. Review*, vol. liii., in which ably discussed.

hoped by this means to hand him over to the tender mercies of the Inquisition. They pursued their end with obstinacy, if not with talent: that they did not succeed showed that the spirit of the age had undergone a change—the change, in fact, which found its expression in the great Reformation which, ere many years elapsed, was begun by Luther.

The Reformation was, indeed, the completion of the movement begun by the Revival of Letters, or rather, perhaps, we should say, would have been so had it been true to the principles on which it was based. Priestcraft was still mighty, and the Church capable of throwing obstacles in the way of the intellectual progress of Europe, and a purely secular movement was incapable of overthrowing the power of the Priest. How to obtain the boon of intellectual freedom for men, was now the question. It was answered by the Great Lutheran Rebellion against the Church. In the Reformation of the sixteenth century we see the assertion of the principle of intellectual freedom, and its partial triumph, but by no means the end of the work to be done. Let us not mistake the character of that Lutheran Reformation; the enfranchisement of the intellect of man from the shackles of priestcraft it in part accomplished, but a religious reform in the true sense of the term it was not. It is in looking at the theological aspects of the fifteenth century that we come to understand what sort of a dragchain the Reformation placed upon itself. It gave a blow to the Priestcraft of the elder time, but it set up a Church, a Priesthood, and a Theology of its own. And so creeds and forms, organ-grindings and psalm-singings, ceremonies and formularies, still usurp the place of Religion. Doctrines are still preached in the place of duties. The Church of Priestcraft (shorn, it is true, of much of its ancient power) still exists amongst us. The single-headed Roman Pope has been transformed into a many-headed Protestant Pope. Authority still arrogates the right to ignore, and seeks to crush, reason and free inquiry, and the Vestry has taken the place of the Vatican. We would not, however, for one moment desire to create the idea that the Reformation did a small work. It caused men to look Priestcraft face to face; it established a great principle, that of antagonism to authority; it vindicated the rights of reason, because itself was only possible by acknowledging the right of men to liberty of thought. But in its success it forgot to be true to its mission; and nothing can be more certain than that the work of Reformation—of a real religious Reformation in the true sense of the term—has yet to be done.

While, however, we are not blind to the necessity of a New Reformation, let us not close our eyes to this, that in the sixteenth century, ere yet the sciences had been developed, men were not in the position in which we are. They were necessarily the slaves of superstition to some extent, for science is the only capable destroyer of superstition; and science, in the true sense of the word, was the birth of an aftertime. It must be recollected, too, that the Reformation was a cause as well as a consequence, and to the liberation of thought, and activity of mind consequent on it, must be attributed much of the scientific progress made within a few years after the time of Luther. But, that Priestcraft was not destroyed by it, is a truth apparent to all who study the records of the last three centuries, and at some of the footholds left for the Priest we shall look in our next article. The work of the New Reformation is to complete the destruction of Priestcraft in all its forms—that is its negative side. Its positive side is to import into the religious field the truths disclosed by the moral and intellectual growth of the ages since Luther.

JAS. L. GOODING.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE SIKHS.

BY THE LATE CAPTAIN W. MURRAY.

(Continued from page 346.)

BUNDS, or dams, are always constructed, after the rains have ceased, to raise the water to a level with the surface, and to render it applicable to the purposes of irrigation; were a total prohibition of this beneficial practice to be enacted, large tracts on many estates, through which streams flow in deep channels, would become uncultivated, and the villages depopulated, to the serious loss of the proprietors, and the ruin of their zumeendars. With the view of relieving the deficiencies experienced from a want of the fluid in the arid districts lower down, a substitute for the dam might be found in a hydraulic wheel of simple construction, to draw the water to the level, and, in places where the banks are comparatively low, it will only be requisite to dig the kool, or cut, for the reception and carriage of the water, deeper, and to raise it in the cut by sluiceboards. The churras, or leathern bags, in common use at wells, with a relief of bullocks, might also be serviceable in other spots. All these expedients, however, fall very short of the utility and cheapness of the dams, when water requires to be conveyed many miles, and every kool is a canal in miniature.

Nuptial contracts are made in early youth by the parents or nearest of kin, who, in too many cases, are influenced more by pecuniary and sordid motives than by the welfare of the children. Disagreements are very common relative to betrothments (mungnee), and to breaches of a promise of marriage (nata, or nisbut), amongst all classes of the inhabitants. In some instances, real or imaginary diseases, or bodily defects, will be alleged by one of the contracting parties, as a reason why the bargain should be annulled; in others, a flaw in the caste, and, in most, a discovery that the girl had been promised to two, three, or four different families, from all of which the needy parents or guardians had received money, ornaments, or clothes. If both parties be the subjects of one chief they appear before him, and either he or his officers satisfies them, or refers the decision to a punchayt of the same class as the disputants. If the complainant and defendant happen to reside in separate jurisdictions, and either of the chiefs persevere in evading a compliance with the rule in such cases, or reject the award of a punchayt, Gaha, or self-indemnification, is adopted by the opposite party, and the subjects, property, and cattle, of his neighbour are picked up and detained until satisfaction be offered and procured. The other side issues its letters of marque, and this pernicious system is frequently carried to the commission of serious outrage, and to infractions of the public tranquillity.

It is not a rare occurrence for a parent or a guardian to be convicted of marrying a girl to one man after her betrothment to another. The chief, or a punchayt, in general, in such cases, gives a verdict that the plaintiff is entitled to a female from the family; and if there be not one, the parents or guardian must find a substitute; or, as a dernier expedient, to which the injured party very unwillingly assents, the money he may have expended, or a trifle in excess with interest, is decreed to be restored to him, that he may find a spouse elsewhere.

Amongst all the Jât families, and some others of the lower classes in the Punjab, a custom prevails, on the demise of one brother leaving a widow, for a surviving brother to take his sister-in-law to wife by the custom of Kurawa or Chadurdalna. The offspring by the connection are legitimate, and

entitled to succeed to a share of all the landed and personal property. It is optional with the widow to take either the eldest or the youngest, the latter being generally preferred and deemed most suitable. Should she determine to relinquish worldly ideas, and to reside chaste in her father-in-law's house, she may adopt this course; but such instances are very rare, particularly in the case of young females, and are not to be looked for in a society, and amongst tribes, notorious for laxity of morals, and the degeneracy of their conceptions.

In default of surviving brothers, and in accordance with acknowledged usage, the widow is at the disposal of her father-in-law's family: from the moment she has quitted the paternal roof, she is considered to have been assigned as the property of another, and ceases to have a free will. Where the hymeneal bond is so loosely and irrationally knit, it is not a matter of surprise that the feeble tie and servile obligation which unite the wife to the husband should make but an insincere and heartless impression. Females are daily accused before chiefs and their officers of breaches of conjugal virtue, and of having absconded to evade the claims of a father or mother-in-law, or the established rights of a jeth or a daiwar. When they have fled into the territory of another chief, it is often difficult to obtain their restitution; but the solicitations of a punchayt, and the more forcible argument of reprisals, are in the end efficacious, and the unfortunate woman, if she do not, in a fit of desperation, take opium, or cast herself into a well, is necessitated to submit to the law of the land, which she will again violate on the first opportune occasion. Sense of shame, or feelings of honour, have no place in the breast of a Jât, and the same may be said of men of other low tribes. They will make strenuous exertions for recovery of their wives after they have absconded, and will take them back as often as they can get them, bickering even for the children the woman may have had by her paramour, as some recompense for her temporary absence, and the expense and trouble incurred.

Debtors and revenue defaulters who abscond, and find protection in a foreign state, are seldom demanded, and, if demanded, never surrendered by even the most petty chief. The promise is made, that, when the delinquent has the means, he shall discharge whatever sum may appear, on a scrutiny into his accounts, to be fairly due by him. It is not uncommon for a deputation, composed of the heads, or of some respectable inhabitants, of a town or village, from which a person has removed, to proceed and wait upon the chief with whom a fugitive may find an asylum, and, entering into stipulations for his personal safety, to receive him back, if he be willing to return.

In the Sikh States, there are no compulsory laws for raising money for the relief of the indigent. Most fugeers belong to a punt, or sect, and each sect has its temples, which are endowed with lands and villages (termed oordoo and poora) by the chiefs, and to which churahawa, or offerings of grain and money, are made by its votaries. An eleemosynary establishment is sometimes founded, in places of great resort, by chiefs and wealthy natives, and named Suda-birt, at which every stranger is entertained for a certain number of days, and fed gratis. Every Hindoo temple has its muhunt, or head, to whom are attached his immediate chelas, or followers, who parade the country, towns, and villages, asking or demanding charity, which forms the support of their superior and themselves, and is freely distributed to the needy stranger and weary traveller who may stop at their gate, or desire a lodging and a meal within the courts of the Thakoor-Dwara.

(To be continued.)

NEWMAN STREET FREE CHURCH SUNDAY LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT,

(Continued from p. 332.)

It is impossible to look upon this in any other light than as a sacrifice made by way of Atonement, and those who are familiar with the classic histories will remember numerous other instances of a similar character. So that, unless we close our eyes to the most obvious facts, it is impossible to deny that the Atonement theory was well understood by nations which had no intercourse with the Hebrew people.

But, and returning to those theologians who admit this fact, we have to consider whether, as Magee argues, the Atonement theory originated in heaven, and, by means of revelation, was communicated to mankind—thus whether the idea, as conceived by the classic nations, was not handed down from the earliest times, rather than born among them as the child of their own reasoning and vain imaginations. They who maintain the former, should, at least, be prepared with some arguments to justify their position; for it is evidently illogical to create data upon which to rest conclusions which are intended to justify theological theories, when the theories, conclusions, and data, are, as in this instance, utterly at variance with all sound reasoning, and the entire phenomena of Nature. When was the revelation given? Unto whom was it addressed? To such questions there is no answer, saying this, wherein the fact to be proved is quietly assumed, as being beyond the sphere of doubt, namely, that the theory could not have arisen without some such assistance. But what if that theory be false? What if God never required that men should sacrifice bulls and goats? If we are to believe the prophets, then it is undoubtedly true that He did not—they say that He did not demand it even from the Hebrew nation. The language of all the greater prophets leaves no room for doubt upon this point. It is needless to quote the numerous striking passages from Isaiah wherein sacrifice is repudiated, for they are so well known: I select three passages from other writers. AMOS, in his poem, represents Jehovah as saying,

“I hate, yea, verily, I despise your feasts,
And delight not in your solemn assemblies,
When ye offer me flour and burnt offerings,
Behold, now, I will not accept them!
And upon the peace offering of your fatlings I will not look.
Take ye away from me the noise of your songs,
And the melodies of your psalteries let me not hear,
Let Justice roll on as roll the waters,
And Righteousness as a mighty stream.
Did ye offer to Me sacrifices and offerings
During forty years in the wilderness, O, house of Israel?”

That closing question is very pointed, and more than intimates that Amos did not believe the system of sacrifice was maintained in the wilderness—it is equal to saying that the wanderers did not offer such sacrifices. And Micah was in the same state of conviction. He says,

“With what shall I appear before Jehovah,
And bow myself before the Most High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves of one year old?
Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams,
Or ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my sin,
The fruit of my body for my sin?”

Oh, man, He has made known to thee what is good ;
 What, then, doth Jehovah require at thy hand,
 But that thou do justly, and love mercy,
 And walk humbly before thy God ?”

Nothing can be more clear than this writer had risen far above the sacrificial theory ; and felt that a good life is the noblest offering, and a pure heart is the best recommendation to the favour of heaven. But the theory that God gave His command to the Jewish people to offer up bulls and goats is distinctly repudiated by Jeremiah. He says,

“Thus saith Jehovah, God of Hosts, God of Israel,
 Put your burnt offerings with your sacrifice, and cut the flesh ;
 For I spake not to your fathers,
 Nor commanded them, in the day when I brought them out of Egypt,
 Concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices.
 But this did I command them, saying,
 Obey my voice, and I will be your God,
 And ye shall be my people.” *

If this be true, then the entire history of Israel, as set forth in the Pentateuch, is not to be relied upon ; for in that it is most distinctly set forth that Jehovah had, not only issued His orders, which involved sacrifice, but had, also, entered into the most minute details with regard to the form in which they were to be offered. The Mosaic books are little more than the embodiments of that very system which Jeremiah repudiates ; but, to the intelligent mind, there can be no difficulty in deciding that the mournful prophet had seized upon a much higher truth than his predecessor had done. It would not be difficult to shew, that, so far, at least, as the Hebrew nation is concerned, sacrifice, as a complete system, came late in the day. Doubtless they shared the common religious ideas of the East, and this for ages without having any written system. Then a number of poets rose among them, who taught, in opposition to the priests, that sacrifices were not required ; that, in truth, the whole priestly system was rotten to its core. One after another taught thus, until the priests and the temple were neglected, and then it was that the chiefs “found the book in the days of Josiah,” containing the sacrificial system so clearly set down, that no doubt could be entertained about its object. This was the answer made by the priests to the prophets—“there is the book,” but we, in modern times, are no more bound than the prophets to believe its contents. To my mind, it is as clear as possible—as clear as it was to the early prophets—that God never commanded any sacrifice, but that men believed He had done so is equally clear. As in other matters, so in this, they believed that to be the truth of God which was but the child of their own fancy ; and if we are freer from this weakness than they were, the fact is only to be accounted for by the value of their example.

Here, however, we must turn away from the ancient to modern ideas, to learn what are the prevalent theories of the Atonement, what is supposed to be the nature of the offering, with its fruits. I say the “theories,” because there is no unity of believing as to its nature, or its effect ; some men maintaining that it means the very reverse of what is taught by others. A distinguished modern writer upon this subject, describes the theories under four heads, and says of the first, that it is a scheme by which it is represented that the interference and suffering of Christ, in itself, unconditionally saved all souls and emptied hell for ever. This theory arose in the minds of those who had received it as the natural and the only consistent completion of the view they held concerning the nature and consequences of the fall of Adam, the cause and extent of the lost state of man. Adam as the head of humanity, represented and acted for his whole race ; the responsibility of his decision rested, the consequences of his conduct would legitimately descend, it was thought, upon all mankind. If he had kept himself obedient through that easy yet tremendous probation in Eden, he and all his children would have lived on

* Chap. vii. 21-23.

earth eternally in perfect bliss. But, violating the direct commandment of God, the dire burden of sin, with its terrible penalty, fell on him and his whole posterity for ever. Every human being was henceforth to be alien from the love of goodness and from the favour of God, hopelessly condemned to death and the everlasting pains of hell. The sin of Adam, it was believed, thoroughly corrupted the nature of man and incapacitated him from all successful efforts to save his soul from its awful doom. The infinite majesty of God's will, the law of the universe, had been insulted and broken by sin. The only just retribution was the suffering of an endless death. The adamant sanctities, the fatal necessities of God's government, made forgiveness impossible. Thus all men were lost, to be the prey of blackness and fire, and the undying worm, through the remediless ages of eternity.

"But then God had pity on the souls He had made, and Himself came to the rescue. In the person of Christ He came into the world as a man, and freely took upon Himself the infinite debt of man's sins; by his death upon the cross expiated all offences, satisfied the claims of offended justice, vindicated the inexpressible sacredness of the law, and, at the same time, opened a way by which a full and free reconciliation was extended to all. When the blood of Jesus flowed over the cross it purchased the ransom of every sinner: as Jerome says, 'it quenched the flaming sword at the entrance of Paradise.' The weary multitude of captives rose from their fiery beds of torture, shook off the fetters and stains of the pit, and made the cope of heaven snowy with their white-winged ascent. That prison-house of the devil and his angels should be used no more to confine the guilty souls of men. Their guilt was all washed away in the blood of the Lamb. Their spirits, without exception, should follow to the right hand of the Father, in the way marked out by the ascending Redeemer." This is the first form of Universalism, the form in which it was held by several of the Fathers, in the earlier ages of the Church, and by the pioneers of that doctrine in modern times. St. Cyril says, 'Christ went into the under world alone, but came out with a huge host, leaving the devil there utterly alone.' It is a necessary result of a consistent development of the creed of the Orthodox Church, so called. By the sin of one, even Adam, through the working of absolute justice, hell became the portion of all, irrespective of any virtue or fault of theirs; so, by the voluntary sacrifice, the infinite atonement of one, even Christ, through the unspeakable mercy of God, salvation was effected for all, irrespective of any virtue or fault of theirs. One member of the scheme is the exact counterpoise of the other: one doctrine cries out for and necessitates the other. Those who accept the commonly-received dogmas of original sin, total depravity, and universal condemnation entailed upon all men in lineal descent from Adam, and the dogmas of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Vicarious Atonement, are bound, by all the constructions of logic, and all the claims of consistency also, to accept the scheme of salvation just set forth; namely, that the death of Christ secured the deliverance of all, unconditionally.*

It is not, however, the custom of theologians to study the claims of consistency, or to pursue their doctrines to a logical issue; and those who are consistent and logical in their acceptance and application of the theories of the Churches, are usually denounced as the worst of heretics and unbelievers. Of course no attempt is ever made to show why or wherein those who diverge from what is called orthodoxy in this matter are wrong—and even orthodoxy itself is at war with itself upon many points connected with the doctrine of the Atonement. So that in regard to this "most vital part of the system of salvation," an enquirer is left by the very men who pretend to guide him in the difficulty that he knows not which guide to follow.

(To be continued.)

* Prospective Review, No. xxxviii. pp. 2, 3.

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THE TOPIC OF THE WEEK.

THERE cannot be a doubt in any mind regarding our choice of the subject for our "Topic of the Week:" there is but one which will command attention, and, indeed, the natural feelings of indignation which have risen in all minds, render it impossible to speak upon other than of the dastardly conduct of those who commanded the American ship of war, when laying in wait for, and making their descent upon the British Mail steamer—*The Trent*. Englishmen have been deeply moved by the news, but it is not merely an English question. Every European, especially those who have studied the modern history of civilisation, feels indignant with the government of the United States for issuing instructions broad enough, even colorably, to justify their officers in pursuing such a course of outrage and insult. They know that if such proceedings are commended by a legitimate government there will be nothing left but for the bully and the coward, first to make and then to administer international laws. It is felt that the outrage is directed against the polity of Europe, and must be thus resented. It may be that the cousins of the Bulls' Run racers, intended only to slap us upon the cheek, but, as when a drunken brawler goes at midnight to pour forth the torrent of his abuse at the door of some one with whom he is offended, he annoys and breaks the rest of all the neighbours, so the ginsling heroes of the *San Jacinto* could not employ force against the *Trent* without offering a gross insult to, and positively assaulting, the whole community of European nations. Strictly speaking, the act of the American captain was piratical. It finds no justification in the laws of nations, and if it is to be admitted as tolerable, then good by to the security of commerce and the honour of a national flag. This is perceived by all the European statesmen. They may not care about our honour, but they cannot avoid caring for the principle which has been assailed; hence the emotion in Paris and elsewhere. So that if any war arises out of the event it is pretty certain that the leading nations of Europe will stand staunchly by our side.

But if Frenchmen and Spagiards, if Germans and Russians feel it, what must we feel who are the descendants of Drake and Blake, of Harry the Fifth, Cromwell, and a whole host of valiant men, who gave time, wealth, and life itself, as the purchase price of our national honour and

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES. VOL. II.

2 B

freedom? Language altogether fails to convey any true idea of the depth and nature of our emotions. It is to be read on men's faces, but cannot be expressed. The pain, too, is rendered more acute by the fact that it was Americans who offered us the insult. Had they been Africans or Mexicans, had they been Chinese or Russians, we should not have felt it so acutely, because we do not expect such good behaviour from the untaught, as from those who are annually enriched by all our treasures of thought and culture. That our children—our petted and instructed descendants—should misbehave is the sore point.

Moreover, it is all the more painful when we remember that the men were but coming over to speak for themselves, in relation to the great struggle and its prospects. Why should the Court of Washington fear their speaking? They were sent upon a mission which all honest men must respect, and if the Northerners had felt perfectly secure of their own cause they would rather have lent them a ship, in which to cross the Atlantic, than have seized them from our steamer.

And the cowardly nature of the action galls us. Had the Trent been armed the American captain would have carefully given her a wide berth. They who make their descents upon unarmed villages are the first to protest against advancing against a well defended city. We hope that at some future time one of our gun boats may be fortunate enough to come to close quarters with this braggart captain and his frigate, for we cannot doubt that they who could fire round shot and shell upon a mail steamer would speedily surrender if attacked by a smaller vessel, decently armed and manned.

Some of our contemporaries are busy discussing the question, Why do the Northern States desire to drag us into the quarrel—to fasten a war upon us? It needs not much discussion. The fact is, that they are even more galled by our looking at them in their failures than they are by the failures themselves. When there is a quarrel going on in a house, they who are engaged most are far more annoyed by one neighbour looking in at the window than by fifty strangers doing the same. Men do not like to cut a poor figure in the presence of those who know them. This causes the Northern States to feel to hate us, because we are the witnesses of their shame. They cannot conquer the Southern States, so they turn round to insult us. It is as when two boys have been fighting without either gaining the victory, and then one of them turns to kick a man who stands by—he will do something "plucky" in order to save his reputation. And it may be that the Northerners would be glad to have a brush with England, because in that case there would be a show of reason for consenting to let the Southern States go. They could then plead that had it not been for the treachery of England the Union would have been restored. But if we are to be involved in the struggle it must be for some better purpose than to serve as the cats' paw for the heroes of Bulls' Run—to be used merely in order to drag them out of a difficulty.

But, curiously enough, some of our papers have contained articles in which the question is asked, if there be not some law upon the subject to justify the course which has been pursued. There is no such law, no such justification. The government at Washington has positively repudiated the only theory which would have furnished even the shadow of an argument in favour of the outrage. The exercise of what is called the right of search presupposes that two nations are at war. With all their ingenuity and effrontery not even the Americans would argue for their right to overhaul vessels in a

time of peace, so that even themselves confess that, to justify the search or seizure, under even the most favourable circumstances, two nations must be at war. But, as the matter now stands, they will not admit that two nations are at war—they do not admit the belligerent right of the Southern States. Their declaration is, that the present struggle lies between “rebels” and loyalists, between “vile conspirators” and true citizens; in fact, that it is a vile rebellion, not a war between two equal nations. Thus, so far as the international law books are concerned, there can be no appeal to them. Why refer to Vattel when there is no actual war? Obviously there can be no talk about the right of search until it be acknowledged by the Government of Washington that there are belligerent nations. It cannot be conceded to them to deny the fact, and still to act as if they had admitted it.

From the first hour it was known in England that the Southern ports were to be blockaded, we consented to the measure, rather by way of showing our good feeling than because of accepting it as being in accordance with the known law of nations. Had we chosen to have done so, we could have protested against the blockade, and thus have hampered the authorities at Washington; we did not set up the plea of right, lest it might be misconstrued, but unhappily the statesmen of the North are not endowed with those nobler sensibilities which enable men fairly to appreciate generosity or self-sacrifice. They have no sense of honour, at least not of that finer quality which enables those of the Old Dominion to serve and be served, without making great professions or stump speeches. They knew that we did not insist upon having our due, they were aware that we abstained from demanding that free access to American ports which is conceded by treaties, and from which they had no proper blockade to exclude us, and they concluded that our conduct must be ascribed to the low feeling of fear. Being themselves incapable of generosity, they cannot conceive that any other nation can be generous. Trained to make something by every movement, they imagine that the same feeling actuates others. Thus all our acts of kindness, all our quiet concessions, have proved to be but pearls cast before swine; so that there is nothing left for us but this, to deal out that measure of punishment which cannot either be misconceived or diverted from its purpose.

It may happen, however, that the cute Northerners, seeking only to gain their ends, and caring nothing about the morality of the question, will insist that the two captured men are rebels; that, although there be no war, they are justified in reclaiming their own subjects from the deck of any ship. Of course, unless there be a war, as already stated, they have no right to enter any ship; and if there be a rebellion, then directly any of their subjects enters the ship of another power, as a political refugee, he cannot be recovered until the government upon whose protection he has cast himself consents to his restoration. The United States has distinctly recognised that fact on former occasions. When the surrender of Kossuth was so loudly demanded from Turkey, the Washington Government resisted, and when a number of the Hungarians had entered an American vessel, was it not immediately admitted by Austria that she dared not follow them, and could not even demand their surrender? It is not long since England was upon the brink of war with France upon this very subject; and the question then was, not whether political refugees, rebels as they are called, should be given up when claimed, but whether they should be tried in our courts and then surrendered. England unanimously resolved that under no circumstances would it give up men who were only charged with political offences—not even if they had conspired

against the life of a foreign power. And shall we concede the still larger power to America to stop our ships and take out such persons as she chooses? Have we sunk so low as to be guilty of granting to those who bully us what was refused to a respectable neighbour? If the poor trembling slave comes to our ships and takes shelter, he cannot be surrendered, and that which we hold to be good law for the black slave and the civilised European we shall still maintain in relation to the Southerners.

Evidently if the seized men were "rebels," they could not be legally seized without violating that right of hospitality which we have acceded to all political wanderers; and the Americans could not have touched us upon a sorer point. Directly the men came under our flag they were as much under our protection as if they had been landed in the London Docks, and the insult offered to England in taking them from the "Trent" would have been no greater if the men had been seized in Regent Street, and borne away on board an American steamer.

To us it appears perfectly clear that the whole transaction was premeditated in spirit if not in its actual details, and it does but add one more to the numerous insults which from time to time have been offered us by the same parties. But the hour of reckoning is not far off. As a rule, and for many years past, the Northerners have abused, misrepresented, and threatened us. Every charge which egotistically infatuated and dirty minds could conceive they have preferred against us. Their press has been a sink of foul iniquity, into which the bitterness of a blatant million was poured, with the intent of goading us into actions which must have compromised our dignity, and rendered us the servants of their purposes. Their politicians, who could not otherwise succeed, have invariably adopted the plan of vituperating the English Nation; every article written in reply to their abuse served as a god-send to the knavish editors, for it sent up the sale of their paper, and that was all they desired. Having no character to lose, they had nothing to fear, but everything to hope from the war of words and the exchange of abuse. They indulged the native malignity of their natures to their heart's content, but happily, without either exasperating us or tempting us to go deeply into their schemes. We understood their position too well to become their tools. Some nations probably believed what they said, but only those who either desired us to suffer, or who never care to enquire for the truth.

It may be, however, that as a nation we have lost some portion of the respect we formerly had from persons upon the Continent, and have lost it through what these rabid writers have said, or insinuated, against us. But do what we can the results cannot be changed. The matter is not to be mended by recrimination, for the men who thus indulge have neither honour, morality, nor justice in them. Slugs will crawl over roses, and leave some portion of their slime behind. And they who are jealous of the successes of others, cannot avoid doing their little all towards destroying more than they could create. They cannot love their competitors, so they are sure to malign them. He who has fought through difficulties to a position of command, is always prepared for hearing the cry of those who have failed, and is equally prepared to hear their curses. Nor can he enter the lists to contend against them. He who fights a sweep is sure to get plenty of soot in with his victory. We knew this, and carefully avoided entering into the lists with those who malign us, and we knew, also, that the very nature of their attacks carried their own antidote. The jealousy of their hearts was so clearly shown in the composition, that few persons could have needed any explanation of

the attack. They hate us because we have so completely succeeded, and in the very fields where they had predicted our failure. In 1812 they were mad enough to suppose they had ruined us, and when the war with Russia had commenced, they fancied that we must be beaten, because of their resolving that none of their citizens should take arms upon our side. This, however, was very fortunate, for, with Bull's Run before us, we consider ourselves fortunate in not having enlisted them.

They indulged in vain boasts of how speedily they could sweep us from the seas; how readily they could destroy our reputation among the nations. This is the ordinary resource of those who are weak, for they endeavour to make up in words for what they are deficient in deeds. But at their threats we only laughed, for, knowing their impotence and our own strength, their folly reminded us of the unfortunate ass on the railway, that kicked the advancing express engine and was crushed to death for his folly.

But, now that they have abandoned mere bullying, and have been foolish enough to commit the overt act of seizing us by the beard, to smite us before the world, we dare not any longer tolerate their conduct, and if, in punishing them for the recent insult, we remember also the accumulated wrongs and indignities they have offered, it will not be harshly remembered against us. We can afford to forgive much, because we are strong, but when it becomes our painful duty to punish, the work must be effectually done. There is no use in half-measures, for we are bound not only to resent the insult, but also to give the Americans such a lesson as will qualify them hereafter for entering the society of nations without the danger of disgracing the confederacy.

We do not, however, disguise the fact that our task is a painful one. War is always a terrible evil, and it is even more evil when they who drew milk from the same breasts stand face to face instead of shoulder to shoulder. Even the African savages do not care to kill and eat their own relatives. But national duty knows nothing of blood-relationships. It has happened that a Brutus has been called upon to condemn his own son, and the world applauds him for his heroism in doing it. And now that we are called upon to inflict punishment upon our own kith and kin, the crime and cause being theirs, the remorse cannot be with ourselves. We shall suffer enough, but it were better to endure a millionfold more than tamely to endure the agony which such an outrage invariably creates. Being at the head of modern nations, we must be content to pay the usual price of greatness, while defending noble principles which uninjured we received and uninjured we must hand down to posterity. Nor need we fear that in doing this we shall have any other enemy. Doubtless the Northern Statesmen have imagined that could they once get England involved in a war France would enter the lists against her. In that they will find themselves bitterly deceived. The Emperor of France, even if he desired it, which we do not believe, cannot afford a war with England. He will not stand up to justify an insult which reacts against himself, neither has he any interests to promote by joining the Northerners. If we go to war, then it is certain that cotton will be set free and the French will rejoice—they will not fight to stop the supplies they so much need. Thus, having no fear upon that score, all our power can be given to the defence of our invaded rights. We have to prove that our flag still rules upon the sea, and we can prove it. As at Inkermann our Soldiers proved that the heroism of our ancestors unabated flows in our veins, so in the coming conflict our Seamen and Soldiers will not fail to defend our privileges and to maintain our old renown.

P. W. P.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—XLIX.

FOOTHOLDS OF PRIESTCRAFT.

WE have said that the Reformation of the sixteenth century was false to the principle upon which it was based; nor is the proof of this proposition difficult. Our readers who have gone with us through the series of articles, in which we have sought to lay bare the sources of that Reformation, and, in so doing, to estimate correctly the true characteristics of the movement, will have seen that it came as the aggregate result of the reawakening of the human intellect and conscience from the long sleep of ages—that mankind found it necessary to rise up in rebellion against the spiritual thralldom which the Church had forced upon them, in order that way and scope might be found for their intellectual and moral progress. The authority of the Church—that spiritual despotism which had reigned so long, had to be questioned; and this could only be logically and effectually done by the assertion of the right of private judgment—the authority of the individual reason. There is, in fact, no logical standpoint between submission to authority and absolute free enquiry. But the Reformation sought to find such a standpoint, and instead of asserting the right of free enquiry, sought to set up a new authority in the place of the old; and while it asked the right of private judgment for the Reformers themselves, as against the old Church, denied the same right to other persons, as against them and the Church established by them. In addition to this, it got itself wedded to certain theological systems which its supporters, most inconsistently, asked the very men whom it had set free from the older despotism slavishly to submit to.

It is indeed more from the desire to form a correct estimate of the movement, than by way of blame, that we call attention to these things; for, in truth, it perhaps could hardly have been otherwise. It is an undeniable fact that men cannot travel all at once to the full possession of perfect freedom, but only by degrees, and by a process often illogical and inconsistent. And it is but just to admit that the assertion of authority made by the Reformers grew out of the circumstances of their time; what is to be deplored is, that priestly parties and partizans have sought to take advantage of what was a necessity in that age, and to make it appear to be a necessity for all the ages. The Reformers appealed from the authority of the Church to the authority of the Bible, and as a necessary consequence of that appeal essayed to establish the dogma of the literal plenary inspiration of the books, which they themselves (of their own judgment be it remembered) accepted as canonical and true. However arrogant, presumptuous, or even dishonest this may appear, judged by the light of three additional centuries, simple justice demands that we should ask whether there was anything to justify them in this; and we think it must be admitted that there was sufficient cause, if not to justify, at least to explain such a course on their parts.

There is nothing perhaps which we have more frequently urged in these articles, or, we think, more completely proved, than that the Reformation was the outcome of causes in operation throughout the centuries preceding it; and we find that when viewed theologically, the same thing is true of it. Its theology, if not borrowed from, was prefigured and anticipated by, many of the writers of the fifteenth century. Of these John Wessel was one, and the most celebrated. Of him Luther said: "If I had read Wessel sooner my adversaries would have presumed to say that I had borrowed my whole doctrine from him." Years before the time of Luther, Wessel had written:

"All Scripture is a connected whole, whose several parts must be inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore true; for the whole cannot be true if even the smallest part be false. . . . The Holy Scripture cannot be taken to pieces, for all Scripture forms a necessarily connected whole, so that not even the smallest occasional statement therein can be false." After the manner of theologians in general, this is sufficiently dogmatic, although it may be doubted whether it is very convincing. However, there was here the full and broad assertion of the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, which became the very foundation stone of the Protestant creed established by the Reformation. This doctrine was seized and held with the utmost tenacity by the Reformers; and absurd as it must appear to all calm unprejudiced thinkers on the subject, we yet believe that it was a necessity of the position in which the early preachers of the Reformation found themselves. In this necessity lies the explanation or justification of their course in this matter.

In combating the Catholic Church, the Reformers were opposing an authority, whose foundations were deeply rooted in the minds of men. The strength of the old Church lay in this, that she could say, and in saying so, command the belief of thousands—"I speak in the name of the Most High; God Himself speaks by the mouth of my priests." How vain then to oppose, unless the opponents also could claim to speak with the authority and in the name of God. What was a poor monk Luther, or anyone else, to do in the way of putting down the Church if he spoke with less authority, or unless he could appeal from himself to God in the matter? We believe, therefore, that Dr. Ullmann does not go a whit beyond the simple truth, when he says that the opponents of the Catholic Church were forced to hold with the utmost strictness the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, for they were compelled to array against the tradition and authority of the Church, some palpable and apparently solid foundation for what they taught in opposition thereto. "In the peculiar and mighty struggle of that age," continues the same writer, "their position was made only firm and impregnable by the Biblical expression of Revelation being acknowledged to be absolutely perfect, every single word regarded as substantially the Word of God, and incapable of improvement, and the inspiration of all Holy Scripture, both as to matter and form, decidedly maintained." Here, then, we have, to say the least of it, a reasonable explanation of the course taken by the Reformers in this respect; and can, even while deploring the results arising out of their action, acquit them of blame in regard thereto. They, doubtless, believed it if we cannot; they had a reason for believing and teaching it, which those who, in these days, repeat their fallacies and appeal to their weaknesses, but know not how to imitate their courage and strength, do not possess.

Even theologians themselves have been fain to confess that "the doctrine of inspiration has been pushed to an untenable extreme throughout the whole Protestant theology." * Yes! untenable enough, truly. The idea of book revelations, in its mildest form, is sufficiently opposed to reason; for to suppose that the Allwise would be so unjust and so foolish as to seek to make known His Will to man through a medium so capable of distortion, so imperfect, vague, and indefinite, as human language would be, even if all the world spoke the same tongue, and so utterly useless as it is to all but those who speak and read the particular language in which the revelation is

* Ullmann, ii, p. 419.

made, is an absurdity that will not stand the test of a moments' free thought. And when we think of the length to which it is carried in the tracts and treatises of our "religious" literature, and in the weekly sermonising of pulpit orators, we can only wonder and grieve that men could go so far on the road of folly, and have consented so thoroughly to abandon reason at the bidding of the priest. But although untenable in the face of reason, this doctrine has laid firm hold on the superstition and unreason which men have been led into in the name of religion, and accept in the place and stead thereof. Because the majority of men are not reasoners it still maintains its place among orthodox "religious truths."

In order to understand how it is this doctrine has held its own so long, we must bear in mind that it is a very common mistake amongst men to confound opinions and facts, the theories of speculative thinkers with the verities of Nature. A Ptolemy declares that the sun moves round the earth, and for many hundred years the rest of men accept the statement as one of the facts of the Universe. A Malthus declares that the human race is too prolific, straightway it is declared that poor men should not marry. A Chalmers propounds the doctrine that the robbery of the many by the few is necessary to the well-being of society, and forthwith it is believed that a landed aristocracy is a dispensation of Providence. All the sciences bear witness in their histories to this same human weakness. In every department of human thought and inquiry we find proof of the same thing. Within the range of the physical sciences we find men for centuries striving to fit the facts to the theories, rather than seeking to find the true theory which fitted the facts. When any one discovered a fact which seemed to set the theory at naught, "philosophers" and "wise men" gathered round to debate upon the new discovery; and if, after all their endeavours, it obstinately refused to fit, the conclusion they came to was, that it was so much the worse for the fact—"the theory couldn't be wrong." And so, if in its results it were not so sad a record, the history of past humanity would be ludicrous in the extreme. As it is, devils may laugh, but the angels weep; the evil-minded may find much to ridicule, but the good man can only be affected unto tears.

In every department of human thought this has been but too true; but nowhere has this principle obtained the same prevalence, kept the same firm hold, or existed so long, as in the realm of theology. Theories have ruled there unchecked by reasoning of any sort. Not only did they not fit the facts, but were completely opposed to them. Men are even now in the habit of repeating, Sunday after Sunday, from pulpits and in churches and chapels, things which, in the hearts of them, they disbelieve, which, as reasonable beings, they are compelled to disavow. For instance, we have, in the character of the theological God, one clear proof, among the many which might be cited, of how readily men allow the bold lie of Priestcraft to override their reason, and set at naught their better judgment; for there are but few among men who really, in the hearts of them, believe God to be what theology teaches He is. In these views, to which we have alluded as taught by priests, and accepted by men, regarding the Bible, we have, also, another case in point. This theory, that the Bible is of God, and that in it we have His written Word, is assumed to be a fact, in spite of everything which tells against it; and whatever evidence is discovered in opposition to the theory is denounced as false; for the cry is, the theory cannot be false.

In the theology of the Reformation, then, we find that which gave firm footholds to Priestcraft, in spite of all that was done to overthrow the spiritual

despotism of the elder time. We have sought, on this occasion, to indicate only one, but that the most important, of these. With his foot planted on the Bible, the priest is still strong amongst us, and, as an authorized expounder of the Word and Will of God, claims our submissive reverence for his teaching and his office. But, more than that, he uses the Bible as his armoury, from whence to strengthen his other theological positions; positions rendered strong, in the first instance, by having formed part of the Reformation Creed. At some of these, we have still to look; and we draw our readers' attention the more closely to this subject, because it is the duty of the Religious Reformer, in these days, to shew, as it is well for all to learn, that Protestantism is not religious perfection; and that Luther, and the rest—great and good men as some of them were, however far many of their followers have diverged from their model—did not exhaust the religious possibilities of humanity, and but imperfectly begun a work which has yet to be carried on towards perfection.

JAS. L. GOODING.

OUT OF THE CLOUD;

OR, AN ENGLISH RECTOR IN SEARCH OF A CREED.

A TALE; BY P. W. P.



CHAPTER XXV.

LONDON INTERIORS:—THE TAP OF THE "THREE JOLLY BUTCHERS."

"WELL, uncle, now that we have visited the Galleries, Museums, Public Buildings, Theatres, and so many other places, that I cannot even run over their names, I hope that you will never find it in your heart to write as you did before, 'that we let you go back to the country before you had seen half the London sights.' I believe that you, and your friend, Mr. Lester, have seen all that is to be seen, and I'm sure, if you had not been up, I should never have seen half so much."

This was said in a half-playful tone by a very noble-looking youth, of about eighteen, to Barrington, who, as he now stood, was a grave-looking senior, with all the marks, in dress, bearing, and person, of a well-feathered gentleman-farmer, but who did not seem inclined to acknowledge the truth of his companion's remarks. For some time he stood looking, now across the Park at the Palace, then his gaze glanced away to the towers of the old Abbey, and, anon, he turned round to take another look at the Wellington Monument. He preserved an uneasy silence, which the youth could not avoid perceiving, so he at once stated his conviction that his uncle was still unsatisfied, and asked, Was there any thing he knew of that he would like to visit? Thus appealed to, he turned his kindly face upon the youth, and said,

"Charles, I confess that, with my friend, Lester, I have bored you a great deal, and I feel very much indebted for the kind manner in which you have endeavoured to gratify our whim for seeing everything worth seeing in 'Modern Babylon,' as Lester persists in calling it; but, my boy, you have not shewn me what I most want to see. All that you identify with the lions of London you have shewn, but I want to see the interiors of the dens in which the many live, and the places in which they find amusement. Let us visit the homes and haunts of the lowest classes, and I shall be satisfied."

Charles now looked astonished, but his uncle continued, "The fact is this, that last autumn we had a sort of missionary agent in our county, who related many terrible stories of 'low life, as it is to be seen in the back streets and alleys,' which I believed to be untrue. And yet he had such an air of truthfulness about him, he spoke so earnestly, and was so ready to answer all my questions, that, although several times I was about to denounce him as an impostor, the words died away upon my lips, and I resolved that the next time I visited town I would go and see for myself if there were such places, and persons, and scenes, as he represented. Now, Charles, that is what I want to do, and Lester wishes to accompany me. I have heard a great deal for and against the man's honesty. One of our members declared that there is no truth in the stories, whereas the bishop fears, as he said, 'that the account is but too sadly true,' and I should like to judge for myself."

Charles looked the very picture of despair, and it was quite certain that he was incapable of doing what was desired. He could not guide his uncle through the dens, neither was he acquainted with any one who could. He knew every place of fashionable resort in the metropolis, knew every street and square of any note; but the lower world of London was as little known to him as the tops of the Andes, or the forests of Brazil. The thought had occasionally occurred to his mind, that the long rows of small houses were inhabited, that the courts and alleys were populated, and that their occupants must have some places of recreation which, in various particulars, must differ widely from those with which he was familiar, still the thought of exploring them had never dawned upon his mind; but now that his uncle had intimated his desire to visit them, he felt a considerable degree of shame at his ignorance. For a time he hesitated, but, seeing a Police Serjeant approach, he seemed at once to have obtained a clear perception of the course to be pursued. Leaving Barrington and Lester, and stepping up to the officer, he, in a few words, conveyed the idea of what he stood in need of. "Uncle, and friend, from the country, desire to visit the dens and hells of London—a guide required, who, for a consideration, would undertake to shew them all." These words were distinctly heard by Barrington, who added, "Yes, Charles, and mind that we don't care so much about the price, so long as we can get to see the places."

A better man than the Serjeant could not have been selected to advise upon this delicate point, for, as it happened, he had a brother named Belter, who had been many years "in the force," one who, as he said, was "fly to every move," who could "patter all the slang," who knew the "queerest kens," and who would take any gentleman into, and bring him out of, the "gammiest cribs in London," without a hair of his head being injured. Arrangements were made for this so-much-to-be-desired individual presenting himself at their residence in Gower Street sometime during the evening. At eight he was announced, and Barrington, with Lester, was soon plunged deep into the mysteries of London life, as known to a retired police officer.

This man, in various ways, was a most extraordinary looking person. In dress he reminded you of the soldier who has just quitted the service, and mounted a suit of second-hand, fresh from Monmouth Street; his clothes were tolerably good, but evidently they were not made for him, and none of the garments harmonised with the others, or with the gait and manner of the wearer. He looked more like a soldier badly made up in disguise than anything else, and the wonder was, however he had mixed so freely, as he had done, in the lowest company, without being suspected. But a little experience served to show that when in the presence of those he wished to deceive,

he could cast off all his stiffness, and could play any part with the most perfect ease and finish. His eyes were small, gray, and restless; he was ever looking at you, and yet not intently; he seemed to see everything, and yet it was only by means of side glances that he immediately mastered the details of every place he entered. But, looking him full in the face, it was impossible to avoid the conclusion that he was either a thief-catcher or a thief. There was a low cunning about that face which could not be dwelt upon without pain, and when it was lit up with smiles, as he told of the adroit means he had adopted, in order to attain his ends in the capture of some one against whom he held a warrant, it was perfectly impossible to hear and see without feeling a sense of loathing. Still he was the man of whom good use could be made, and before the conference ended, for a consideration, he was engaged to pilot the two through all the "cribs" and "kens" which abound in the metropolis.

Just as he was about to leave, Belter asked Barrington what clothes he intended to wear. This question remained unanswered, and, perceiving that he was not exactly understood, he observed, "There is just two ways of goin' to see them places; you can go just as you is now, dressed up like gentlemen, but then, in that case, you may as well stop at home, for it's certain you won't see nothin'. Directly we goes in the chaps will say, 'Here's two swells and a bobby!' they'll be down on us like one o'clock, and there's nothin' you'll see but just the crib itself, and that won't be worth the trouble. The other way is to go in other toggery, so that they'll not know we is any more than they. If they don't suspect what we are, then we shall see all there is to be seen; and now I shall leave it to you, gentlemen, to say in which way we is to go."

Barrington, and Lester especially, was startled at this, for, as the latter afterwards remarked, in the whole course of his life he was never disguised, except at Christmas, or other mumming times; still, however, he saw the propriety of adopting the latter course, for then only could he see life as it is really lived by the under ten thousand. Here, however, the dilemma arose, Where could the garments for a full disguise be obtained? But the difficulty was soon swept away, for the guide could supply all that would be required. He had furnished many "gents" who went upon the same mission, and could fit them out for all the places they would have to visit, "except," said he, in an undertone, eyeing closely the capon-lined form of Barrington, "that we shall have to slit the backs of some of the waistcoats to make them serve for the stouter gentleman." It was arranged that on the following evening the first visit should be paid, which, however, would necessarily be brief, because of other engagements.

That visit was to be to the tap of the "Three Jolly Butchers," where, as the guide declared, "there would be nothin' perticuler, except seein' what a tap was; and it would be a very easy way for gentlemen to begin, as know nothin' of how the workies does it."

After threading their way through several streets lying near the Strand, they stood before the "Three Jolly Butchers," and it was at once observed that, as the guide had said, there was nothing remarkable in the external appearance of the house. He declared that there were hundreds of houses in which the same might be seen as within this, and his only reasons for selecting it were that he had frequently been there, and that it was certain a company would be assembled. The door was soon pushed back, and the three made their way to the end of a long gloomy passage, which was filled with

odours not pleasant to those who were at all familiar with "real" tobacco and "mild havannahs." At length they entered the tap-room, took their seats in a corner, and the guide, with the voice and in the tone of a navigator, ordered "a pot o' stout, and some ginger in it."

It required the flight of some moments before the visitors could thoroughly survey the dingy apartment. There was a dull haze, half compounded of smoke, half of fog; for even had smoking been prohibited, it was evident there would still have been a haze. It was natural to the apartment, and might perhaps have arisen from the fact, that the room having seen better days was ashamed of being seen. It was long—about thirty-eight feet—but not wide in proportion, being not more than twenty feet across. Its height did not exceed twelve feet, and there were two gas-burners dependent from the cross-beams. The ceiling was well coated with a black crust, which indicated that it had not been whitewashed for many years past. Barrington and Lester gave it as their opinion that it never had been, but Belter directed their attention to a part where some eager scribe had written "Hookey Valker," with the end of a stick. This had broken through the black crust, and revealed the dingy white beneath; which, however, was rapidly being buried again beneath the prevailing blackness. Whether the floor had ever been scrubbed since it was laid down it was impossible to discover; if it had it must have been in the days of Walters, the first of the three who had made their fortunes in the place. But, although unaccustomed to soap and water it was roughly swept and treated with a coat of sawdust.

Lester looked anxiously around in order to complete a mental inventory of the furniture and decorations. Was not this, he asked of himself, the room in which many scores of human beings assembled to take their pleasure? and does not pleasure within doors necessarily involve the idea of ornamentation and comfort?—what comfort, what pleasure could be had here?

Belter, who seemed to understand what was passing in Lester's mind, observed that—

"The people are lively enough who come here. They all seems to enjoy theirselves. And for the matter o' that I have had some fine fun here. You know their aint no theives or gals allowed in the place; they are all working chaps, and sometimes they make up a regular fine party, and when the drink is goin' they don't see the dingy look of the place. I believe if the landlord was to clean it out many of his old customers would clean out with it."

Lester looked incredulous, and was astonished when Belter informed him that, to his knowledge, three men had made their fortunes out of that room, for, as he imagined, they should have done something to it in order to testify their gratitude. The reader will smile at his simplicity, knowing that the rule of the world is to spend money over that which is doubtful, and to take no heed of that which is certain. There is a neat parlour in the "Three Jolly Butchers," over the decoration and comfort of which more is spent every year, than in any twenty years is spent over the tap room, and that although not above one-twentieth of the receipts come out of the said parlour. The reason of this anomaly will eventually appear.

Everything in the tap was heavy and substantial. Belter declared that "the chaps as come here don't care for showy things, and won't be particular about using 'em gingerly." The benches were all fastened to the floor, and the heavy poker was chained to the grate, "to prevent their bein' used in a shindy." There was nothing loose in the room save a large wooden coal-

scuttle, a ditto salt cellar—the salt in which was the roughest and dirtiest-looking condiment ever known by that name, and a large gridiron which was alternately used for fish and flesh. Tip, the carpenter, stood waiting patiently and good-humouredly, with his beef steak cut from the shin, until Jem, the chaunter, had done his “two sodgers.”

The tables stretched along the length of the room were elegantly carved. Hundreds of initials were there. Just where Lester was sitting there were two letters, S. M., newly carved. They were the product of the skill of Samuel Mallet, who whiled away the odd half-hour, while his companion was away pawning a few tools, upon the proceeds of which they intended to make themselves merry. Man is man in the tap-room as well as upon the pyramids; some achieve their immortality by carving their initials upon the head of Athor, in the temples of Aboo Simboul, and others by carving them upon the top of the “Three Jolly Butchers’” tap-room table. Taste guides all, and opportunity finds the place for carving.

We should, however, be unfaithful to our readers were we to omit mentioning the fact that, although, generally speaking, it was bare, there was one ornament in the den. Over the fireplace was a large black-board, upon which a curious specimen of wood-engraving was pasted, the which was quite as badly engraved as it was drawn. One day, when the landlord was wandering through the Strand, he observed the said engraving hanging in a window; it was that of a long and thin tectotaller, who was very lovingly hugging an iron pump. The unhappy artist had probably intended it to be passed off as a comic sketch; but, although it was a failure, Boniface was delighted, and, as it cost only threepence, he made the investment. Whether it was out of hatred to those who drink cold water, whether it proceeded from his desire to promote the artistic tastes of his tap-room company, or whether it was only from a spirit of wagghery, it were difficult to determine; but he pasted it upon the aforesaid black-board, just above the never-absent line, “Pay on delivery,” so that all who entered were compelled to look upon the intended satire. Lester moved forward to inspect it somewhat closely, when an old hanger-on in the room whispered—

“Read that ’ere at the bottom, just read that.”

Lester, by placing his face nearly close to it, was able to make out the following words, writ in pencil—

“Where all your tin is gone and spent,
And you’ve not a mag for bread or rent,
From ‘The Jolly Butchers,’ with bleeding mug,
They’ll shoot you out, the pump to hug.”

“All true, I can swear to that,” said the same thin and haggard old man, and in a thin piping tone, which indicated want of bread, of home, and every creature comfort. Then looking at Lester, he whined out, “Can you lend me twopence till to-morrow?” The money was advanced rather too easily, as Belter believed; for he interposed—

“You have got that pint, but don’t try it on again till that’s cleared off, for you ain’t goin’ to suck us in so easy as you think for.”

The three visitors were more intent upon observing the company than the room itself; and, although it was not possible distinctly to make out the appearance of all who were in it, there were some who may be easily sketched. When they entered, two cabbies were busy with an elegant game, called “shove ha’-penny.” Some lines, about an inch and a half apart, are cut

across the table, one above the other, proceeding from the end; and the aim of the player is to push with his hand three half-pence into each division, so that the coins do not touch the lines. Whoever does this in all the divisions first, wins the game. The cabbies played on quietly enough until just the end of the game, when a noisy dispute arose as to whether a certain halfpenny did or did not touch a certain line. One protested that it "warnt not aneer the line," while the other declared that it was "bang on the line." As usual, the gentlemen of the company were called upon to decide the knotty question, but without any practical effect. The first who examined gave it as his belief that "the mag" was on the line, upon which the opposite cabby suggested that he had better go home and borrow his "grandmother's specterkels afore he looked at another mag." The next decided that it did not touch the line, whereupon he was informed that "a cove as 'll go about to say that that 'ere mag is not right over the line ain't no gentleman." This seemed to influence the company considerably, for several now gave it as their opinion that the coin did really touch. When our party was appealed to, Belter suggested that it would be best to toss up, and thus decide it; a proposal which was generally approved, and adopted.

This "shove-ha'-penny" question had created no little stir among the company, which numbered about thirty. Everybody was talking, and, without any real row, there was general confusion. Presently a stentorian voice shouted, "Order for a song;" and Belter, nudging Barrington, said, "Now we shall have it—that's Brummagem Bill, the drover, and he can't sing at all." Bill was not of that conviction, although ready enough to confess that "in attempten to permote the general harmony, a chap couldn't do no more than his best." What was deficient in one way, he made up in another; he lacked sweetness, but made it up in power; there was no flexibility, but that was compensated for by the rolling of his eyes, and waving of his hands; and, before he had got half through his song, it was evident that a noisier and less musical man could not be found in the metropolis. The company, without knowing it, were great philosophers; they adopted the wise course of tolerating the infliction, for Bill was an ugly customer to meddle with; but there was a manifest sense of relief when he reached the end of his long ditty, which related to some green willows, an old bank, and a "most lovely fair." He was immensely satisfied, and, as Belter remarked, "Now that he's sung his song, he'll drink hisself blind drunk;" which seemed to be true, for he loudly called for another pint, and prepared himself to make a night of it.

At one table two drovers were seated, and dirtier specimens of humanity it were hard, if not impossible, to find. It is possible that at some remote period they might have been washed, but certainly not within the past twelve months, and only they who were liberally endowed with faith could believe them to have been thoroughly cleansed at all ever since leaving the laps of their mothers. These men were busily employed discussing the "condition of England" question, in which they evidently took great interest. One of them bawled out, somewhat lustily,

"Well, it doesn't matter for that at all. I say as how Old England is a goin' down the hill. Things aint as they used to be, and there's no tellin' what's goin' to happen."

The other seemed to be somewhat more of a patriot, for he would not agree that the country was hastening to ruin; on the contrary he argued that things "was a lookin' up—special Short Horns and Devons, hides and tallow,"

Thus contradicted on his darling proposition, the first speaker, still more markedly raising his voice, protested that there was "no use in a man's shuttin' his eyes to the fact that the best days for Englishmen was when the beastes was druv to market in a Christian way, not packed up in boxes to be shoved along the rails as they are now."

This was his stronghold, and for a time he argued as if he had been the leading member of the Society for Preventing Cruelty to Animals. Quite forgetful of the heavy-knobbed stick and the rude method of driving in the days of Old Smithfield, he dwelt most feelingly upon the "sin of crowdin' poor beastes into trucks so closely that they can't stir nor breathe." And from the "fact that this is done" he deduced his conclusion that "England is a goin' down the hill."

Close by where the three visitors sat, there were two men, far gone in liquor, who were busily discussing certain religious problems. They were well up in the contents of a well-known newspaper, in which racing and religious news are brought into pretty close contact. The Editor, desirous of compensating for the large amount of space devoted to the interests of blaggardism, is particularly careful in scenting out heresy. A man may make fighting the business of his life, and be applauded, but if he happens to doubt the correctness of the redemption theory, he is denounced in language which will not admit of any parallel for its bitterness and vulgarity. The Editor scalps all those who differ from him upon religious dogmas, but, then, he makes up for it by blessing all who have nothing to do with any form of religion. In the ethics and dogmatism of this paper these worthies were well read, and hence it was that they employed themselves discussing the question, What becomes of the souls of those soldiers who fall in battle? There was something horribly disgusting in the style in which they argued this point; both of them were far gone in liquor, but, through familiarity with the usual language of the theological schools, they were so well up in the set phrases that even in the moments of their absolute drunkenness these were the sentences which most commonly escaped their lips. They now spake of heaven and hell with perfect composure, for both of them being children of grace, or Calvinists, they could have no fear regarding the future.

Lester was so thoroughly disgusted by their speech that, much to the astonishment of Belter, he motioned to leave, when the latter quietly observed,

"The fun hasn't begun yet, and as to that religious talk, it's nothin' to what you may hear every day in the tap-rooms. There's more talk about it in these places than elsewhere, and when a missionary comes in, as there sometimes is, you'll hear better sermons here than are to be heard in church."

At this moment one of the two disputants fell forward upon the floor, helplessly drunk, and the other, having attended to the neckcloth and head of his fallen companion, coolly ordered another pint, and then went on talking to himself about the Sin of Infidelity and the marvellous decrees of Providence.

As a rare event in this place a woman had entered the room; she had come in unnoticed by our party, and had taken her stand in front of a man who was sitting alone. She bore all the marks of poverty battling with a sense of decency. Her clothes were clean but all worn and faded, her countenance wore the aspect of patient grief, and there was so much of mental agony in her voice that its first sound made Barrington start in alarm. The man before whom she had planted herself seemed to be a daily labourer, but a sot. His face was one of the most repulsive the two friends had ever gazed upon, not villanous but selfish, sottish, and stony cold. He sat, pipe and pint in hand,

with all the starched majesty of Victoria theatricals, and appearing neither to see nor hear the woman who was pleading for a little money. She was his wife, the mother of his four children, one of whom was laying at home ill, and she was here in order to coax him to give her the means of buying arrowroot and other necessaries, but he heeded her not. In a low voice—in a mere whisper, but like that of the dying, painfully distinct and sharp—she pleaded, “Oh, John, don’t keep me here before all these men, do give me something to get what the doctor has ordered for little Willie.” There was a pause of two or three minutes, but the man heeded her not, and again she spake. “Willie is so bad and I am afraid to be away long! do, dear John, do give me a shilling!” Still no answer, no notice of her presence. “John dear, don’t be angry at my coming here. I wouldn’t have come but I was afraid of losing Willie through his not having what the doctor said he must have. Do give me a shilling, there’s a dear!” The pot boy entered the room, and the man spake, “Fill this pint!” and at the same time put silver into the boy’s hand. When he returned, the wife said, “Give me the change,” and the boy looked inquiringly at the man, who merely said, “Give it here!” and then having put it into his pocket, he resumed his hold of the pipe with one hand and the pint with the other. Lester grew alternately pale and red, and it was evidently his desire to interfere, but Belter prevented him by whispering, “If you do he’ll half-kill her to-night when he gets home.” The warning had the desired effect, but still the big tears stood in his eyes. It was his first view of life in a tap-room, and was so much darker than he had anticipated; that he felt completely overcome. We never saw him so deeply affected, and yet, as Belter remarked, this was nothing to “what he would see if he were in the mind of visiting all the cribs and kens of Lonnon.” Presently, when his strange sickly condition had passed away, he turned, and said, “Barrington, I am ashamed of what we have been doing down in Crosswood, all busy raising money for the benighted Africans, just as though we had no benighted English at home.” But his remarks were cut short by observing the woman in tears moving towards the door. “Let us go,” he said, “for I should like to speak to her.”

The three reached the street: and the woman—it was gold that glittered in her hand, the gift of the Crosswood Rector, and for a time it rendered her speechless. When they turned their faces toward Gower Street, Belter observed, “I’m afraid the gentleman will be killin’ somebody with kindness, and he’ll want all the gold in the Bank to serve the turn of all who are in her condition.”

* * The continuation of the Lecture—“Theories of the Atonement”—is unavoidably postponed, but we shall insert an additional portion next week. It will be, of course, concluded in the present volume.

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A TALE; BY P. W. P.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE WORLDLY SOCIETY.

THE man who hopes to exhaust the wonders of London in a month—supposing him to be a thinker—finds, at its close, that he has only had time to examine a small portion of its outer wrappings, but has not plunged beneath the surface to see and know it as it really is. Lester and Barrington spent several days in visiting the wretched lanes and alleys wherein so many human beings manage to lengthen out a miserable existence, and their evenings were devoted to visiting the low public houses, and music rooms, in which the wretched inhabitants of those poor districts are in the habit of obtaining some measure of relief from their sufferings. The conclusions forced upon them by what they witnessed and heard, were not favourable to the existing systems of either Church or State. Lester was bold enough to declare that, had circumstances compelled him to live in such places, he should feel himself not merely justified, but positively bound to make war upon society at large—he marvelled, too, not that the people gave way so freely to passion and lust, but that, having no teachers, they avoided so many sources of sin and shame. Upon the question of teachers, however, he obtained new light.

On one occasion, having entered into conversation with a working man, they were informed that there would, “soon be an explosion; things are not to go on long as they have done;” and when they enquired upon what he based his hopes of a change, it turned out that a new sect had come into existence, whose leader was sure to overturn the present order of things. Naturally anxious to obtain light upon this point, they pursued their inquiries, and discovered that a gentleman named Willow had founded a society known as the Anti-Religionists, whose theory and form of faith was summed up in the words, “Care only for the things of this world, and avoid all thought about an Hereafter.” The man went on to describe how earnestly the gen-

tleman was working, how anxious he was to bring in all classes and conditions of men, and closed with stating that Mr. Willow was to deliver a lecture that evening upon the advantages of his system. For a time Lester looked at the speaker as doubting his seriousness—doubting if he were not speaking in fun, but, finding that he was in earnest, he asked,

"Do you mean to say that this gentleman has founded a society in order to have men taught to look after the things of this life?"

"Yes, Sir," answered the man; "and I think it was pretty near time it was done. Ever since I was a boy I have heard nothing, neither in Church nor Chapel, but that I was to keep the future world constantly before my mind, and the fact is, believing what they said, I was always crying and praying, so that by doing what I was advised I never got on in this world."

"That is to say," observed Lester, "you devoted too much time to the subject; but I cannot see how that can justify you in wholly ceasing to care about it. Music is good, but it is not good for men to devote all their time to it. It is good in autumn to provide for the coming winter, but not good to do nothing else, for in that case we should perish. There is a medium in all things, which it seems to me you are now avoiding, quite as distinctly as you avoided it before. But surely your new teacher must be insane."

"Insane, Sir! Not he, indeed," indignantly ejaculated the man. "Insane, indeed. Well, that beats all. Insane! No, he knows what he is about well enough I'll warrant, as, to their cost, the priests will soon discover."

"Don't be vexed at my remark, my good man," said Lester, in a sort of apologetic tone, "for I did not desire to give offence. Only it struck me as strange that a man could think it necessary in this nineteenth century to teach the doctrine of Worldliness. It appears to me that there is less thought now about a future life than ever there was; men are hurrying to get rich; they give time, strength, and intellect to win prosperity in the present, and never pause to consider that other states of being must follow this. In the Crusading and Reforming ages such a doctrine was necessary, but not now. Nor can I imagine anything more ridiculous than for a man to turn out into the streets of London to preach the importance of attending to the comforts of this present life, when, as we all know, that is what men are already bent upon. It is like carrying coals to Newcastle, or advising Englishmen to love good Christmas feeding. What could be more ridiculous than for a Reformer to go into the City, and, posting himself upon Cornhill, or in front of the Exchange, there to hold forth to the busy merchants upon the folly of wasting their time thinking about another life—upon the high importance of paying more attention to their prosperity, ease, and comfort in this life? Would they not deem him mad; or, at least, that he had returned in some marvellous manner from the dead, with whom he must have passed, at least, two hundred years, without obtaining any knowledge of the recent history of the country? As reasonable men they could not consider it possible for any one to blunder so enormously as to suspect them of not thinking enough of the present life. And they are but fair specimens of the majority of modern Englishmen—their heaven is success, and their torment consists in not succeeding."

"Yes," said the man, "but the parsons don't preach it; they are constantly going on against it."

"And what else would you have them do?" enquired Lester. "Is the system so good for your class? Do you find that masters are made better by ceasing to think of another life? Or is not this the truth, that the more

care they have for getting on in this world the less thought they have for the working millions who, as instruments, are in their employ? They do not stand in need of any teaching which will loosen their faith in the deeper laws of life, but require to have the fact kept constantly before their minds that there is a future wherein the memory of the injustice done in the present will be the worst hell it is possible to conceive. That man is no friend to the working classes who would preach the doctrine of Worldliness. The middle and upper classes would be far more unjust than they now are if all the incitements to virtue, and the terrors awakened by vice, associated with thoughts of another life, were destroyed. And you, as a working man, should be the last to boast of success in such teaching."

"Well, as for that, Sir, all I knows is this, that, for a master, give me the man as doesn't go to Church or Chapel. Them religious people are terrible hard to deal with. They seem to think that all they give at Chapel must be ground out of their servants at home. I had a religious master once, and he nearly killed me with work. Do what I would he was never satisfied, and when he found out that I burned a little gas late at night, to read some books on geology, he went on about it as if I was a going to ruin him by my extravagance, and myself by enquiring into subjects not good for my precious soul. Give me, for a master, a man who doesn't go to either Church or Chapel, but who has got a feeling for his men."

"You are unfair in speaking thus, for," said Lester, "I'm sure you can name some who go either to Church or Chapel who are as good masters as the best of those who do not attend any place of worship. The fact is, that a man is neither made a good master by attending nor destroyed by keeping away. But you fasten upon the worst specimens of those who go and the best of those who do not, and then compare them, as if such a course were perfectly fair; and what is worse, even, you confound not going to Church with disbelief in another world, whereas you seem to think that they who go to worship must believe in a future."

"And—pardon my bluntness, Sir—in doing that I only imitate my superiors."

"Very likely, very likely," replied Lester; "but depend upon it that the majority of those who go to Church do not heartily believe in a future life; if they did, in any noble sense, they could not live the lives they live, nor could they wink at the iniquity which they so freely tolerate. They believe themselves to be believers, but, as with many who imagine that they have ceased to believe in ghosts, and who find out their mistake when left alone on a stormy night in a creaky old house, so these parties need but the opportunity to render the fact manifest that they have not the belief they had imagined. I regret that it is so; for when men cease to believe in a future—cease to care whether there be a future or no, they are far more liable to fall into those errors of heart and action which create misery for themselves and others."

"I'll not deny, Sir," said the man, "that what you say sounds very reasonable, but I should like you to hear Mr. Willow, and then judge for yourself. People often tell us that we ought not to be led by what he says, but then we can't believe them, for they utter things about him which we know to be untrue. And the Christian preachers tell us that he is only doing it for a living, but we can't help seeing that he is cleverer than they are, and that, if he were to go into the Church, he would do better than they do. For, poor speakers as they are, they get double the income he gets, and have

not half the work to do; so that, if he be a rogue, he is roguing himself. But go and hear, and then contradict him. Let us working men have a chance of learning where the truth is."

"We will attend," said Lester, "but certainly not to discuss. I confess, indeed, that I should like to see and hear the man, who, in an age of greed like this, conceives it necessary to methodise and teach the doctrine of pure Worldliness."

The arrangements for attending the meeting were made between Lester and Barrington, who were not disposed to accept the assistance of their new acquaintance. At the time named, they found their way to the hall, which was dirty, small, and awfully poverty-stricken in appearance. A coffee-room was connected with it, in which sat a number of working men, not many of whom had any care either for cleanliness of person, or neatness of dress. They were smoking, and playing draughts—there was a considerable amount of noise in the place; and, altogether, the whole aspect of the room, and its occupants, was painfully depressing. It was eight o'clock, yet the lecturer had not arrived, neither had the audience; but the latter soon gathered in, and, by half-past eight, Mr. Willow was upon his legs, expounding and justifying the glorious doctrines of Worldliness.

The personal appearance of this new light was not attractive or commanding. He was of middle height, rather slim in person, and evidently very nervous and touchy. His voice sounded unpleasantly, and, when he spoke, there was a monotony in his tone, which argued powerfully against the theory of his earnestness. It was evident that he conceived himself to be a very important person, who, as yet, was not properly appreciated by an ignorant world. The style of his composition was French, both in its glitter and its lack of force. He aimed rather at picking off the warders with the rifle, than at knocking down the tower with cannon-balls. There was cleverness in his method of attacking men with whom he did not agree. Like the boa constrictor, he covered with saliva all that he wished to swallow. It was his aim to satisfy his audience that he was particularly careful not to fail in rendering ample justice to his opponents, but, at the same time, no man could be more unjust; for, in the midst of his praise, he invariably insinuated some censure, some condemnation, which—as, at heart, he intended—completely destroyed the effect that, outwardly, he seemed desirous of producing.

The lecture itself was cold and powerless, and the audience seemed rather to try to like it, than really to feel pleased with what was said. It was evident that they gave the speaker credit for more power and wisdom than he possessed. They understood only in part; but some of his terse passages greatly pleased them. The subject was Worldliness, and its superiority over all systems which involved thought about Deity and a future life. Whether the listeners cared much about a future it were hard to tell; probably not, for their present condition of life was not particularly attractive. All they seemed to need were Food and Rest. The beauty of the world, the marvels of art, the grandeur of human history, they knew nothing of; all they thought, or could think, about, was how to meet the wants of the coming morrow, so that the discourse was quite thrown away. Not a man among them had ever been greatly troubled about the absurd popular theories of heaven and hell, so that there was little fear of fear coercing them into habits of abstract thinking. One thing, however, was evident, that here was no hope of finding the true Reformer. The whole affair proved the want of a Reformer; for, if such an one were to come, then such men as this would be as soon forgotten, as the leaves which fall from the

oak in autumn. The two friends were incapable of sitting the lecture out; but, unlike others, they left the place with noiseless step, musing upon the strange fact, that stump oratory, with all its wordiness and hollowness of heart, seems to have become a British institution, out of which strange issues must come.

"And what think you of this new light—this great leader of freethought? May I not ask what you think of this New Moses?"

"I would fain believe him honest," said Lester, "for it is particularly painful to be compelled to speak of a man in his position as being doubtful, but then I can only do so by believing him to be utterly incompetent to form a sound opinion upon those subjects of which he treats. If I justify him upon the moral side then I must repudiate him on the intellectual. He is self-deceived, and thus succeeds in deceiving others; but his intellectual power is small, and his range of reading has been limited. He has a smattering of many books, but the knowledge of none. I should say that he never reads a book through. His object in reading is not that of promoting the growth of his own mind, it is not that he may thoroughly master the subject upon which it treats, but simply that he may find pretty and telling sentences which may be licked into a new form, and woven into his speeches. I was forcibly struck as he was proceeding by the number of old phrases to which he had given a new dress."

"I am told that he is celebrated for that," interposed Barrington, "and in his writings it is rather amusing to notice how frequently he quotes sentences from books which suit his purpose, but which were never intended by the author to be understood in the sense he gives them. He must have a nice book of cuttings from the scrap columns of the Weeklies which he uses up when he is building his books and speeches."

"That may be forgiven when we remember that the plan enables him to supply better sentences than he has the power to create. And I suppose we must forgive him for his egotism and his defective power as a reasoner. He seems to believe himself to be a discoverer, for he speaks as if he had undertaken to teach a system that was previously unknown—just as if worldliness and carelessness about the future had been unknown to the ancients, and unpractised by modern nations. But what struck me most painfully, in his address, was his abominable prevarication, his unblushing Jesuitism, and his positive self-contradiction."

"That, Lester, is assuming him to be wise in such matters. What you would call proof of his prevarication I should speak of as evidence of his want of perception—he is no more conscious of his evasions, than is the child who explains why it did a certain thing, by saying, 'because I did.' As to his Jesuitism, depend upon it, he is not aware of what he does. Aiming at getting money and applause from the millions, he, by a natural instinct, perceives, and then adopts such methods as are calculated to gain his ends. And as to his self-contradictions, they are so obviously the consequence of his ignorance, both of logic and facts, that it would be wrong to ascribe them either to his badness of heart or to his having a settled purpose to deceive his hearers. I believe him to be thoroughly honest. The fact is, that in these dislocated times, finding that there is no practical belief in the popular theories, and desiring, at least, to know why certain doctrines are to be accepted, he has enquired his way and lost himself in a wood; or, rather, he is like those who, when in the maze, imagine themselves to have found the road out, but who travel round and round without getting any nearer to the

point at which they are aiming. He imagines that by denying the facts he solves the problem. And I was especially amused by his saying that 'the standard of religion varies with fickle creeds; the standard of morality is utility,' just as if the idea of what is useful did not vary as much as the other. The Epicureans and the Stoics were not agreed about what things were useful, for the former would have commended many actions as useful, which the latter must have repudiated as pernicious. Just fancy a convention of human beings assembled together to settle the details of the morality question, and having to measure all the actions under the utility standard. The drinkers and smokers, the dancers and singers, the hydropaths and homœopaths, the allopaths and the expectants, the artists and manufacturers, poets and critics, the law-makers and policemen, in fact, the press, platform, and pulpits, with all the various classes, would be at war with each other, for every one of them would undertake to maintain the utility of some method, system, or form of action, whose usefulness would be repudiated by all the rest. There is as much difficulty in finding out what is the really useful, as in discovering the true religion. We fancy that to be good for us which proves in the end to be injurious. Formerly men were bled every spring and fall, for they believed in its utility. Now we refuse to be bled, because of knowing the injury it inflicts. Probably he would cite this as proving the correctness of his theory, for he is hardly capable of perceiving how ridiculous is the position of a man who sets up utility as a standard of morality, and leaves us without any means of determining the utility of things."

"I was annoyed," said Lester, "by his confounding theology with religion, for the gulf between these two is quite as wide as is that between governments as they are now constituted, and the better systems conceived of by intelligent men; it is as wide as the gulf between our love of the beautiful, and some particular school of art. There is a Turner war now raging in the painter ranks, but who would think of identifying the Pre-Raphaelites with art itself; or of denouncing the beautiful itself, because men differ, not only about how it shall be reproduced in painting, poetry, or statuary, but upon the fundamental question, 'What are the constituent elements of beauty?' In one part of his discourse, he observed that 'The histories of all ages, and the bitter experience of mankind, prove the pernicious influence of piety. It seems that a more useful work cannot be performed than to sweep away the assumed foundations of all religions.' Is it possible to conceive of any statement more prejudicial to truth and justice, or more opposed to experience than that? If he had said that the histories of all ages, and the bitter experience of mankind, prove the pernicious effect of physic, and that no better service can be rendered to humanity than to destroy all faith in its usefulness, the saying would not have been a whit more absurd. For, although it be true, and while deploring its melancholy truthfulness, I shall not be likely to question its validity, that thousands have fallen victims before the relentless pressure of those who were bent upon establishing some religious theory; it is none the less true that thousands have fallen victims to the folly of medical theorists. The victims were slain in different ways, yet still they were slain; but, both in the religious and medical instances, the men acted upon the utility theory this gentleman sets up. They believed their system to be useful, and he, of all men, should not denounce them."

"Well, but, Lester, are you not grateful to him for so freely confessing that, 'considering it to be inimical to human progress, should the religion of

our times be swept away, he would no more think of supplying a new one than the people who had just interred the cholera would think of raising a plague'?"

"There is nothing to be grateful for in that, neither need he have said as much, for it must be known to all men, and simply because he knows nothing of religion. As I was just now observing, he confounds religion with its antipodes, and cannot distinguish between a religion resting upon the soul's emotions and one which is founded upon the creed of the intellect. I should as soon expect a Bosjesman to supply us with a new theory of the polarisation of light, as that Willow should give mankind a new religion. It is not at all in his way, and, in fact, he must abandon his dogmatism, and become a little more attentive to logical rules, as a speculator, before he will be able to comprehend and define the first principles of true religion. He has neither tears nor reverence, and without these he cannot make headway."

"But he professed to be particularly humble—he would not even undertake to say that there is no God, but only that there is not sufficient evidence to prove that a God exists. Was not that a proof of his great moderation?"

"Not to my mind; neither, Barrington, is it to yours. But, banter apart, I think there is not in all Europe a more dogmatic or arrogant man. He professes humility, but does not exhibit it. Certainly he confesses that he does not know the truth regarding many of the most important points he touched upon, but then, having made this confession, he practically discarded it, for he proceeded to argue just as if he knew all about them; never a Methodist local preacher in the land more absolute and dogmatical than he. For instance, did you not notice his saying that it is perfectly useless for men to spend their time trying to find out God? He boasted of always having held that the existence of Deity 'is past finding out,' and that he had equally held it to be a truth that the time employed upon the investigation might be more profitably employed in studying humanity. But, then, again, he said, 'The Non-Theist takes this ground. He affirms that natural reason has not yet attained to Supernatural Being; he does not deny that it may do so, because the capacity of natural reason in the pursuit of evidence of Supernatural Being is not yet fixed.' And shortly after he declared that, 'as the whole subject is beyond human comprehension, no imaginable order of things would serve to prove the existence of a Deity.' Now I cannot understand how any intelligent man, accustomed to speak upon a subject so interesting and solemn, could be thus guilty of dogmatising in the contrary directions. If there 'may be a God,' does it not also follow that He 'may be found out.' If He has not been, does that prove that He will not be? There were men who reviled the earliest 'star-gazers,' men who argued that they had better attend to their wool and corn, had better mind the affairs of the city, for the stars and their nature could not be found out. Even in the days of Copernicus and Galileo, the same was urged by many very eminent and learned men; and when they spoke there was far less reason for believing that such advances would be made in Astronomy as those with which we are now acquainted, than there now is for supposing that we shall find out God. May it not be that some man is now in the world who will be able to accomplish that feat? Who of us, without arrogance, can define the limits beyond which human discoveries cannot be made? When men undertake to declare that no imaginable order of things can furnish the proof, or to teach that time spent in the search could be better employed, they impertinently assume them-

selves to be wise in relation to a point upon which the best of us know nothing. For my own part, I cherish the hope that the day will arrive when in this, as in many other matters, there will be no longer a mere conviction, resting upon Hope and Faith, but a certainty, resting upon demonstrated foundations; and that will come through the labours of men who are content to inquire under the hope that they may enrich the world with a new truth."

"I do not share your hopes, Lester."

"Well, perhaps not, Barrington, but," continued Lester, "I believe you will fully coincide with my feeling against his declaration, that the existence of misery in the world tends powerfully to prove that there is no God. Thousands make that statement with whom we do not feel angry, but it is impossible to listen to it coming from the lips of a man who professes to be a Reformer without feeling deep indignation."

"Well, I don't know about that, Lester, for the fact is that, as he put it in speaking of 'The Amazon,' I felt inclined to agree with him. When he asked, 'What is the use of a Deity, when He does not interfere to prevent such appalling catastrophes?' although annoyed by the flippancy of his manner, I felt disposed to endorse his matter."

"You did! Why, Barrington, surely you have gone through the alphabet of the Divine Government; how, then, could you fall into such an error?"

"Make me to see that it is one, and I'll confess it."

"That is not difficult. God must either rule the world by general or special laws. If by the latter, then He must be constantly interfering; and, in that case, humanity would never achieve progress, for it would have no freedom. They who have everything done for them soon lose the power of doing for themselves. The petted son of a London tradesman perishes miserably in the backwoods of America, where every man has to assist himself. He succeeds who has the fewest wants, and who has learnt how to depend upon his own resources. Thus inaction breeds weakness; the support readily given by others, renders us less careful in ourselves. And so it is upon a large scale. The Irish and English nations were equally cursed with bad governments. The people in the former country are constantly crying out about what they have endured under the government of oppressors, but they ignore the fact that the working millions in England were equally oppressed. Every wrong inflicted upon Irishmen has been equally inflicted upon the Saxon labourers. Why the difference between them at the present time? Simply because the Irishman has been waiting to have done for him what the Englishman has done for himself. The former sat in expectation; while the latter worked, fought, and conquered. Now suppose that some good spirit were to give Irishmen all they want, what would be their condition ten years hence? They would be worse than they are at present, for they would care even less to provide for the future. This Willow would probably have prevented the Irish Famine, which, viewed in all its horrors was most appalling. Yet it saved Ireland, and will prove to be the foundation-stone of Irish prosperity. It was an evil which, like bitter medicine, is fraught with good. Had some man left for every Irishman a little fortune, he would not have proved so great a benefactor to Erin as that famine was. And so it is with all the evils which afflict our race. They are consequences of our ignorance, our foolhardiness, or our neglect. Why should God be called upon to provide for the consequences of these? If we are ignorant, why do we remain so? Why should we dare danger in a foolhardy style? And why neglect those precautions which are known to be essential to our safety? Let us use the resources

already at our disposal, and the measure of human misery will sink to an inappreciable point."

"That is to say, Lester, that evil, and pain, and these great catastrophes, are nothing else than efficient means employed, in accordance with definite laws, for the purpose of punishing us for neglect of duty, and rousing us to the necessity of providing against their repetition."

"Precisely so. And in this I hold that God acts paternally. No good father will remove every cause of difficulty from the path of his child; for, knowing that strength comes with victory, he will rather place them in his way, and incite him bravely to meet and conquer them."

"I grant the force of your argument; still, in presence of the fearful catastrophe, it seems to be impossible to avoid feeling that whoso hath the power should preserve the unhappy victims."

"I will agree with you when you can shew me that it would be wise for the richest merchants in the city to interfere and save those who are on the verge of bankruptcy. We know that such interference would ruin thousands, for they would be rendered reckless by the sense of a saviour in the hour of need. Depend upon it, Barrington, when we look at the facts connected with the moral government of the world, we shall find plenty of evidence to prove His existence, His wisdom, and His goodness; but Willow, I fear, has never ventured upon going below the mere surface."

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMATION.—L.

CONCLUSIONAL.

THE Reformation became possible only by the assertion of the principle of Free Inquiry; but Protestantism, which was the practical outcome of the Reformation, was false to this very principle, out of which itself was born. Thus, in the Protestant Church, the same old foes to human progress appeared with new faces; again did priestly authority assert itself—again was human reason outraged, and a spiritual despotism set up. Protestantism, instead of admitting itself to be but a means to an end, sought to establish itself as the end; the doctrine of finality was taught with reference to the work done by the Reformers, and the impossibility of further progress asserted. And, when we remember that this was the position taken with reference to that which, on its theological side, was but a reproduction of old errors, we see the explanation of the fact that Protestantism, instead of being a means of progress, has been an incumbrance in the way of human advancement; and we find, also, in this, the reason why the New Reformation is necessarily a work of destruction, as well as of construction.

Theologically, Protestantism must be looked upon as a retrogression. The old Church, at least, allowed for some virtue in human nature, and taught that man's salvation was, in a measure, dependant on himself. But the theology established by the Reformation taught that man was thoroughly and incurably depraved, and that salvation came from God alone—the grace of God, and not the deserts of man, ensured salvation. Whence, as a natural result, came the dogmas of justification by faith, election, and reprobation; thence the Antinomianisms and Calvinisms, and the other theological spectres which still squeak and gibber among us, to the sorrow and indignation of all thoughtful religious souls. The degradation of the human was, in fact, the fundamental principle of the Reformation Creed, and the idea still pervades

the teachings of our Churches, with what evil results we have, on more than one occasion, pointed out. Needless is it to repeat here what we have so often impressed upon our readers. We shall confine ourselves, therefore, to a few general considerations connected with this characteristic of the Reformation theology.

To assert the falsity of this doctrine of the innate depravity of human nature, is but to express a truth supported alike by the facts of history and of daily experience. Do we find men willingly and wilfully disobeying the laws of God, and misusing or abusing the faculties He has bestowed on them, except through ignorance, or from the force of false teaching? We do not; when men know the Will of God they are ever ready to obey it. Is not this proved by the progress of Civilisation? No sooner has science unlocked the mysteries, removed the film from the eyes of men, and shown them how to obey, than they have made its lessons practical. One hundred years ago men did many things which every one would hesitate to do now, and so, as we go farther back into the centuries, we find the same truth ever exemplified. There was a time when good men supported the slave trade, looked upon the keeping of slaves as perfectly justifiable; but a Clarkson and a Wilberforce, and other good men, found an ever-increasing audience when they appealed to the moral sense of men, and placed this matter in its proper light. There was a time when good men believed that it was improper to educate the "lower classes," but no sooner was the falsity of this view disclosed than the opposite belief grew ever more and more widely prevalent. The history of man, in all its bearings, therefore, teaches us this, that the doctrine of the innate depravity of man is as gross a libel upon human nature as it is upon the character and moral government of God. To the thinking man nothing can be more fearful than that week after week thousands of men assisted by organised bodies, should be spreading abroad false views of man and man's duty. For when men are taught to forget their self-respect, and to look upon themselves as beings degraded past redemption, except by the grace of God, what can be expected in the shape of noble aspiration or worthy action? That, in spite of such teaching through the past three hundred years, the world should contain so much of goodness and purity as it does, is itself a strong argument in favour of the innate goodness of mankind.

But intellectually as well as morally man is libelled and degraded by our Church theories. At present, except so far as it is exercised by the miserable scholastic subtleties of theology, the intellect of man is left by our religious teachers entirely unfed. And with what result? This—that the Age is becoming more and more an Age of doubt and disbelief, the religious systems existent among us no longer satisfy the growing intelligence of the people, intellect and intellectual pursuits are divorced from religion, or the connection is kept up only by a refined hypocrisy. Is this as it should be? We, as Religious Reformers, think not, and part of the New Reformation we seek to accomplish is to show that the cultivation of the intellectual powers is part of every man's religious duty—a duty he owes to God, no less than to himself, inasmuch as the Reason of man was given to him by the Creator in order that he might use it.

Science and history, art and literature, all the departments of intellectual exertion, we would therefore have men pursue, feeling certain that the result, however it may clash with existing beliefs and systems, must necessarily be good. 'Tis true that the God of Science, the God discerned by the Reason

of man, the God who made this Universe, and impressed those laws upon it which excite our wonder no less than our gratitude, is a very different Being to the God of theology, the God of our Churches and Chapels; but no man who compares the ideas of the Deity derived from Science with those which theologians inculcate, can for a moment doubt which tend most to exalt our conceptions of Divinity. With respect to man, and man's duties, also, the Reason of man creates a standard far above that of the pulpit. Having regard, then, to the theological aspects of the 16th century Reformation, and the evil consequences arising from the creeds it established, we feel that something nobler and better is required. We can no longer remain satisfied with systems which ignore the intellect and moral nature of man, or with religious teaching which supplies nothing for their development and education. We would make peace between Theology and Science, Reason and Religion, now at war, and establish a Free Church, where men, while learning to respect themselves, may also learn to love and reverence God, and obey His Will—where God shall not be libelled, and humanity not degraded.

Our aim in the series of Articles of which this is the last, has been to trace the several sources of the Reformation, and thereby to indicate what were the characteristics of a movement which, with all its failings and shortcomings, was nevertheless the beginning of a new era in the history of humanity, and set free forces yet operant among us for good. The historical aspects of the Age of the Reformation itself, and the chief actors therein, have been as yet unnoticed by us, but will receive our attention hereafter, as opportunity serves. Our object then will be, as it has been, to point a practical moral, and learn the lessons which the men and events of which we treat, from time to time, have for us in this present; feeling that the study of the past is only useful when it enables us, as men, to understand our own powers and opportunities better than we otherwise should do, and creates in us the desire to put them to a proper and efficient use. While admiring the greatness of the Past behind us, it behoves us never to forget the claims of the Future before us—never to forget that there is yet work for us to do, and that our duty is to find that work and do it.

JAS. L. GOODING.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE SIKHS.

BY THE LATE CAPTAIN W. MURRAY.

(Concluded from page 362.)

THE Mussulman classes have their peerzadas, who make their rounds amongst their mooreeds, or disciples, and receive from them such neeaz, or offerings, as they can afford, or may choose to present. Since the decline of the Mahometan, and the rise and establishment of the Sikh power, the peerzadas have to lament the loss, in many instances, and the diminution, in others, of their village endowments. They still retain, however, a portion of the lands they held during the reigns of the emperors of Delhi, attached to their principal rozas, tombs, or seminaries; but the rents from them, and the trifle given in neeaz, are barely sufficient to maintain themselves and families in respectable circumstances, and to support the khadims, or servitors, in constant attendance at the tombs of their saints.

Every village, independent of the fixed dues to the blacksmith, carpenter,

washerman, to choomars, and sweepers, has its mulha, or incidental expenses, charged on its cultivators for what are termed aya, gya, or grain, ghee, &c., given to wandering fugeers, and needy passengers. The Punch, or heads of the villages, who supply the mulha, collect it in cash from the villagers twice during the year, and it not unfrequently gives rise to altercation and dispute, from the real or supposed inclination of the Punch to impose upon them under the specious and pious name of charity, much of which finds its way into the collector's own pocket.

Hindoo and Mussulman fugeers are found located in and around every town and village, and each has his tukeeah or place of abode, to which a few beegahs of land are assigned, the gift of the zumeendars, who, in other respects, also, take care of the common holy fraternity, that their blessing may continue to be upon them.

The jinsee, or grain lands, are assessed by the kun (appraisement) or the butaee (division of the produce in the field): both are exceptionable. It requires a very discerning and experienced man to estimate the quantity in a field of standing grain: in some it is over, and in others underrated. The butaee is detailed and tedious; an establishment, also, is required to watch the different kulwara, or heaps of grain on the field. Cultivators are apt to steal it during the night, and, in stormy and wet weather, much of it is damaged ere it can be housed. It is a common saying, "Butaee lootace," or butaee is plunder. Some chiefs exact a half of the produce, others, two-fifths, and a few, one-fourth. Sugar-cane, cotton, poppy, and indigo, and all the lands under the denomination of the zubtee, are assessed at fixed rates, and the rent is received in cash.

In the Sikh States, the lands of most towns and villages are parcelled out into puttées, turufs, or divisions, amongst the Punch, or zumeendars, who are answerable for the sirkar's, or ruler's, share. In some, where there are no ostensible heads, the lands are held by hulsarees, or ploughs. Thus if, in a village society, there be twenty-five ploughs, and 2500 beegahs, the jinsee and zubtee lands are equalized amongst the asamees, or husbandmen, which gives a hundred beegahs to each plough, and each asamee pays his own rent, much on the principle of a ryotwar settlement. In general, the Punch hold a few beegahs, and also the puchotrah (five per cent) on the nett collections, in Inaam.

The system of assessment by the kun or butaee pleases the agricultural community, and the chiefs, who pay their armed retainers and establishments every six months in kind, with a small sum in cash, called poshakee, or clothing; it also accords with their internal plan of management. On some small estates, with comparatively few followers, it works well, but it is not at all adapted to extended territory and great governments.

The chief sources of oppression on the people, under Sikh rule, emanate, 1st, from the exaction of the siwaae-juma, or extraordinary imposts, levied in cash in every village under the general head of the huq-hubooobuzurbhêt, and branching out into a variety of names; 2nd, the inhuman practice of kar-begar, or the impress of labour of the inhabitants without recompense; and, 3rd, the violence to which they are exposed from licentious armed dependants, quartered in the forts and towers which cover the country, and prey on the village.

Every major and minor chief exercises the privilege by prescription of taxing trade; yet the duties, though levied at every ten or twenty miles, are light. A practice called hoonda-bara prevails in the mercantile community.

A trader gives over charge of his caravan of goods to a nanukpootrah, who engages to convey it, for a stipulated sum, from Jughadree to Umritsur, the emporium of the Sikh States, paying all the duties. The nanukpootrahs, from the sanctity which attaches to their persons as the descendants of Nanuk, the founder of the Sikh faith, enjoy certain exemptions, and are less subject to molestation from custom-house importunity than others. Beema, or insurance, may be had at a cheap rate from the Nauhureeah merchants to all parts of India. Should any grievous or vexatious tax be imposed on the trade by a chief, he suffers an alienation of this branch of his revenue, by the route being changed through the possessions of another, who has the power to protect, and the inclination to encourage, the transit of traffic through his domains.

Sikh women do not burn with the corpses of their husbands. A single exception occurred in 1805, in the town of Boorneah, on the death of the chief, Rae Singh, when his widow made a voluntary sacrifice of herself, rejecting a handsome provision in land. There exists no prohibition against the suttee. In all cases they are understood to be willing victims, and much real or pretended dissuasion is exercised by the public functionaries, and the friends and relations, to divert the miserable creature from her destructive intentions. That affection and duty have not always place in this class of *felo de se*, which would explain and extenuate such a deed, and convert the offspring of superstition into a noble act of self-devotion, is obvious from the frequency of suttee, and from the fact that it is not only the favoured wife, but a whole host of females, that sometimes are offered up to blaze on the pyre of their deceased lord.

NEWMAN STREET FREE CHURCH SUNDAY LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT.

(Continued from p. 364.)

THE second great doctrine of Salvation is a modification and limitation of the previous one. This theory, like the former, presupposes that a burden of original sin and natural depravity, transmitted from the first man, had doomed, and, unless prevented in some supernatural manner, would for ever press all souls down to the realms of ruin and woe: also that an infinite graciousness in the bosom of the Godhead led Christ to offer himself as an expiation for the sins, an atoning substitute for the condemnation, of men. But, according to the present view, this interference of Christ did not of itself save the lost, it only removed the otherwise insuperable bar to forgiveness, and presented to a chosen portion of mankind the means of experiencing a condition upon the realisation of which, in each individual case, the certainty of Salvation depends. This scheme grew directly out of the dogma of fatalism which sinks human freedom in divine predestination. God having solely of His own will fore-ordained that a certain number of mankind should be saved, Christ died in order to pay the penalty of their sins, and render it possible for them to be forgiven and taken into Heaven without violating the awful bonds of justice. The benefits of the Atonement, therefore, are limited to the Elect. "Nor is this to be regarded as an act of severity; on the contrary, it is an act of unspeakable benevolence. For by the sins of Adam, the whole race of men, without exception, were totally depraved, made hateful to God, and justly sentenced to unmitigated and eternal damnation. When, consequently, He devised a plan of redemption by which He could Himself bear the guilt and suffer the agony, and pay the debt of a few, and thus ransom them from their doom, the reprobates who were left had no right to complain, but the chosen were a

"a monument of disinterested and infinite love; because all alike deserved 'the torture of hell.'" According to this conception, all men being by their ancestral act and inherited nature irretrievably lost, God's arbitrary pleasure was the cause, Christ's voluntary vicarious death was the means, by which a certain number were to be saved. Who the individuals composing this portion of the race should be, was determined from eternity beyond all contingencies. The only condition, therefore, upon which any man can be saved, is that he is one of those originally predestined to salvation. All the rest are hopelessly lost, can do nothing whatever to rescue themselves. The effect of faith and conversion, and the new birth, is simply to convince the soul that it is saved, not of itself to save it. That is to say, a regenerating belief and love is not the efficient cause, but is the revealed assurance of salvation, proving to the soul that feels, by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, that it is of the chosen number. That is to say again, the experience of a justifying faith is not offered to all, but is confined to the Elect. The preaching of the Gospel is to be extended everywhere, not for the purpose of saving those who would otherwise be lost, but because its presentation will awaken in the Elect, and in them alone, that responsive experience which will reveal their election to them, and make them sure of it, already foretasting it;—though it is thought no one can be saved who is ignorant of the Gospel. It is mysteriously ordered that the terms of the covenant shall be preached to all the Elect. There are correlated complexities, miracles, absurdities, inwrought with the whole theory, inseparable from it. The violence it does to nature, to thought, to love, to morals, its arbitrariness, its mechanical form, the wrenching exegesis by which alone it can be forced from the Bible, its horrible partiality and external cruelty, are its sufficient refutation and condemnation.

The third general plan of Salvation we are to consider, differs in several essential particulars from the foregoing one. It affirms the free will of man in opposition to a fatal predestination. It declares that the Atonement is sufficient to redeem not only a portion of our race, but all who will put themselves in right spiritual relations with it. In a word, while it admits that some will actually be lost for ever, it asserts that no one is helplessly doomed to be lost, but that the offer of pardon is made to every soul, and that every one has power to accept or reject it. The sacrifice of the incarnate Deity vindicated the majesty of the law, appeased the wrath of God, and purchased His saving favour towards all who, by a sound and earnest faith, seize the proffered justification, throw off all reliance on their own works, and present themselves before the throne of mercy, clothed in the righteousness and sprinkled with the blood of Christ. Here the appropriation of the merits of Christ, through an orthodox and vivifying faith, is the real cause as well as the experimental assurance of salvation. This is free to all. The only conditions that are requisite it is in every man's power to fulfil. As the brazen serpent was hoisted in the wilderness, and the scorpion-bitten Israelites invited to look on it and be healed; so the crucified God is lifted up, and all men, everywhere, urged to kneel before him, accept his atonement, and thus enable his righteousness to be imputed to them, and their souls to be saved. Every one who will, may believe and be redeemed; but a great many will not, and so must be sent to never-ending pains. The vital condition of salvation, reduced to the simplest terms, is an appropriating faith in the vicarious atonement. All other crimes, though stained through with midnight dyes, and heaped up to all the brim of outrageous guilt, may be freely forgiven to him who comes heartily to credit the vicarious death of the Saviour; but he who does not trust in that, though virtuous and gifted as man can be, must depart into the unappeasable fires of the fatal judgment. "Why this unintelligible crime of not seeing the atonement happens to be 'the only sin for which there is no atonement, it is impossible to say.'" Though this view of the method, extent, and conditions of redemption is less revolting and incredible than the other, still it does not seem to us that any person, whose mental and moral nature is unprejudiced, healthy, and enlightened, and who will patiently study the subject, can possibly accept either of them. The leading assumed doctrines common to them, out of which they severally spring, and on

which they both rest, are not only unsupported by adequate proofs, but really have no evidence at all, and are absurd in themselves, confounding the broadest distinctions in morals, and subverting the best established principles of natural religion.

The fourth scheme of Salvation is that which predicates the power of insuring souls from hell, solely of the Church. This is the Sacramental theory. It is assumed that in the state of nature subsequent to the transgression and fall of Adam, all men are alienated from God, and by their universal original sin universally exposed to damnation; indeed, the helpless victims of eternal banishment and misery. In the fulness of time Christ appeared, and offered himself to suffer in their stead to secure their deliverance. His death cancelled the whole sum of original sin, and only that, thus taking away the absolute impossibility of salvation, and leaving every man in the world free to stand or fall, incur hell or win heaven, by his personal merits. From that time any person who lived a perfectly holy life—which no man could find practically possible—thereby secured eternal blessedness; but the moment he fell into a single sin, however trivial, he sealed his condemnation; Christ's sacrifice, as was just said, merely removed the transmitted burden of original sin from all mankind, but made no provision for their personal sins, so that, practically, all men being voluntary as well as hereditary sinners, their condition was as bad as before; they were surely lost. To meet this state of the case the Church, whose priests, it is claimed, are the representatives of Christ, and whose head, the vicegerent of God on earth, was empowered by the celebration of the mass to re-enact, as often as it pleased, the tragedy of the crucifixion. In this service, Christ is supposed literally to be put to death afresh, and the merit of his substitutional sufferings is supposed to be set down to the account of the Church. Furthermore, saints and martyrs, by their constant self-denial, voluntary sufferings, penances, and prayers, like Christ, do more good works than are necessary for their own salvation, and the balance of merit—the works of supererogation—is likewise accredited to the Church. In this way a great reserved fund of merits is placed at the disposal of the priests. At their pleasure they can draw upon this vicarious treasure, and substitute it in place of the deserved penalties of the guilty, and thus absolve them, and effect the salvation of their souls. All this dread machinery is in the sole power of the Church. Outside of her pale, heretics, heathen, all alike are unalterably doomed to hell.*

The writer, whose summary of these various theories has been thus far reproduced, presents in a briefer form the outline of the two remaining systems. He says: The fifth view of the problem is that no soul is lost or doomed, except so far as it is personally voluntarily depraved and sinful. And even to that extent, and in that sense, it can be called lost only in the present life. Death emancipates every soul from every vestige of evil, and ushers it at once into heaven. This is distinctive modern Universalism, and is held by no other Christians. It is swiftly disappearing from among its recent earnest advocates, who, as a body, will undoubtedly soon exchange its inconsistent and arbitrary conceptions for more rational and defensible conclusions.

The sixth and final scheme of Salvation teaches that by the immutable laws the Creator established in and over His works and creatures, a free soul may choose good or evil, truth or falsehood, love or hate, beneficence or iniquity. Just so far and just so long as it partakes of the former it is saved; as it partakes of the latter it is lost; that is alienates the favour of God, forfeits so much of the benefits of creation, and of the blessings of being. The conditions and means of repentance, reformation, regeneration, are always within its power, the future state, being but the unincumbered, intensified, experience of the spiritual elements of the present, under the same Divine constitution and laws. This is the belief of the Unitarians and Restorationists; and it is, as we think, coincident with pure Christianity and the truth of Nature.

Probably it is the belief of thousands who would be shocked were they spoken of as being in any sense connected with Unitarians or Freethinkers. Men form opinions upon this subject which they dare not repeat to their fellow-men. There

* Prospective Review, No. xxxvii, pp. 3-9.

is an immense degree of cowardice in the religious world. Occasionally you meet with a very orthodox man, who startles you with his unorthodox admissions and theories. You probe him further, and you find that at bottom there is little difference between yourself and him, save in this, that although intellectually freed from the despotism of the creed, he has not set himself free from the theory which demands that respectable men shall conform. They play fast and loose with themselves upon this very point. They believe all that the Bible contains when it is explained in their own fashion, but only in that sense. In no other way can we account for the prevailing belief in the Atonement. In no other way can we account for the notion that human beings on earth are hated by their Father in heaven.

Hated by God!—hated by the Infinite Source of Good! They speak about it as placidly as about butter and eggs, they discourse about the wrath of God and the rise in the price of bacon in the same breath. It is not for me to judge them harshly, but I feel justified in saying that, to my mind, it seems perfectly clear that they have never properly considered the weighty nature of the words they use. What curse can fall upon us so blighting and bitter as that of the hate of the mother who bore us, of the father who carried us in his arms? Let the world rise up in arms against us, and we can still bear ourselves bravely in the battle, for well we know that they at home will fully understand and do us justice. But if they hate us—bitterly hate and condemn us, who, then, can compensate for so much misery? I could bear any amount of physical or mental pain without giving way, but the idea that my mother hated me would crush me to the earth. And what of being hated by the Infinite One? There is no theory so damnable as this, for it spreads a pall over nature and puts a demon face upon God. Fortunately it is but a theological theory, as groundless as it is hateful, and as much at variance with the operations of God in Nature as it is with the fact of God's power and goodness.

I argue that its falsity is demonstrable. What good man can hate the poor and the ignorant? He who hath wisdom is tolerant; he pardons more than the ignorant man can do; because he perceives how imperfectly men comprehend the nature of what they do; he looks with sorrow rather than hatred upon their conduct. As the experienced man regrets the folly of youth, and feels that it is years and experience which they need, so the wise man perceiveth that the worst of criminals wrongs himself more than he can wrong others. And so with the man in power. Who can believe that the commander of an army hates all the private soldiers? Raise a man above the possible competition of his fellow-men, and you at once remove him out of the sphere of mutual hatred. They only can hate who have somewhat to fear. But what hath God to fear from man? And what man can have His wisdom? We do but deceive ourselves to our own injury when we speak of Him as hating those whom He hath made. We are but repeating a set of words which cannot have any objective facts of which they are to stand as the signs. Little minded men can hate each other, but as perfect love casteth out fear, so greatness of knowledge and depth of wisdom rendereth hate impossible. I look out upon the fair Universe, and feel that as God loves all so He loves me, and that all I have to care about is this, that I shall so live as to render it reasonable for me not to hate myself. We may act in such a manner as to create that shame in ourselves, which will be the father of self-hatred, but of the hatred of God there is no kind of danger.

(To be continued.)

THE PATHFINDER,

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THE ORGAN OF INDEPENDENT RELIGIOUS REFORM.

CONDUCTED BY P. W. PERFITT.

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NOTICE TO OUR READERS.

THREE years ago we commenced THE PATHFINDER, promising to continue it for two years. At the end of that period it was concluded to continue it yet another year, which has now closed, and with it our Journal in its present form. When we commenced its publication, we hardly hoped to secure the amount of support which has been accorded to us, neither were we prepared for taking advantage of the assistance of our friends to the extent which their kindness indicated we should do. It was clear from the first, that our Journal was too small, and various plans were suggested for its enlargement, some of which would before this have been carried out, had it not been for the claims upon our time and attention connected with preparing the New Hall in Newman Street. At present, various causes are in operation to prevent the enlargement, and, in fact, it seems impossible fully to realise our plans before the Midsummer of 1862. Meanwhile, it was in contemplation to continue the Series in its present form; but the matter having been under consideration by the Committee, it has been decided to abandon that plan, and in its place to issue a Series of Lectures, which will fill the void, and carry us over to the time when we hope, in an enlarged form, to continue our labours. The first set of Lectures will be upon the Immortality of the Soul, and will be followed by others upon various Biblical questions, the whole of which will bind into one volume. Each number, however, will contain a complete lecture, so that in this form they will be more convenient for distribution, and those of our readers who desire to promote our views, will be able to do so more easily than before. This, indeed, we feel is one way in which the work we have in hand may be greatly assisted. The work is one which must be done—and there are many ways in which it may be carried on. We have been prevented hitherto from doing much which will have to be done eventually; and for which we trust time and opportunity will soon be afforded.

For the information of our readers, we take this opportunity of intimating that we hope before long to commence the publication of a "Freethought Commentary on 'The Bible.'" The plan, already matured, is that of giving the authorized text, with the various readings suggested by recently discovered MSS., and those suggested by eminent critics. To this will be appended notes explanatory and critical; notes directing attention to other passages

VOL. VI. NEW SERIES. VOL. II

§ D

confirmatory or contradictory, and extracts from the ancient classical writings which are calculated to shed a light over the passage alluded to. This work has been some time in preparation, but haste in publishing is to be avoided. Our desire is to render it so complete, that whoever reads will be placed in a favourable position for forming an opinion for themselves, regarding the value of the several works which collectively form our authorized Scriptures. We could begin at once, and go on to the end of the reign of David, but prefer to wait until the whole is completed; and, according to our present estimate, the work will be comprised within six volumes, double columns, a little larger than *THE PATHFINDER*.

There is no doubt whatever, that by the distribution and dissemination of Tracts, Pamphlets, and Commentaries, a great deal has been done, and is yet doing, for the support of the theological theories and doctrines taught in orthodox churches and chapels, and there is every reason why all lovers of truth and freedom should wish to see the means used for spreading abroad falsehood and error made available for the spread of light and knowledge, and the advancement of Religious Freethought. We ask our readers, therefore, pending the recommencement of our Journal, to make earnest endeavours to obtain a large circulation for the weekly series of Lectures now to be issued. In this way, too, we feel that a much wider circulation and more extended influence may be obtained for our Journal when its issue is again commenced. The more the work we do, as Theists and Religious Reformers, gets to be known, the better will it be appreciated, and the larger will become the number of those who will rally round us. Not in any spirit of egotism is this said; but because we represent the Truth as opposed to Falsehood, Freedom as against mental and moral Slavery; we represent principles which are strong, those for the overthrow of which we work being essentially weak, given only that men come to understand the true character of each. Men in general support Error only while they remain ignorant of its nature; make them but cognisant of the Truth, and they will at once rally to its support.

RELIGION AND RELIANCE ON SELF.

THE state of the child, as, also, of the savage, the uncivilized, and the ignorant, is one of dependence. They are all, in their every condition, subject to authority, the slaves of superior power, greater knowledge, larger wisdom; and, for every blessing they hope to attain, they put their trust in that which they conceive to be stronger or wiser than themselves. While in this state, none but a very limited progress is possible; to-day is but a repetition of yesterday, and to-morrow of to-day. The savage repeats the mode of existence of his forefathers, and never steps beyond the one millround course pursued by those who have gone before him. The inhabitants of Africa, the aborigines of Australasia, the uncivilized man wherever we find him, ere yet he has passed the boundary which divides the state of civilization from that of savagery, pursues the same courses, adopts the same methods, is, in every respect, the same man as his progenitor of a thousand years since. The child, too, while yet he remains in the childhood state, is but a picture, in little, of his parents and teachers; what they affirm he affirms, what they believe he believes—he knows no creed but theirs, is, in fact, in all respects, a mere repetition, or second edition, of them.

Equally with the savage and the child, one thing is needful to enable

them to pass beyond the state we have described, and that is the birth of self-reliance within them. Directly men or nations begin to rely upon themselves, thought becomes active, and gradually the early state of dependence is exchanged for one of inchoate progress. In proportion to the growth of this grand quality, and in that ratio only, does progress become possible for the nation or the individual. None but those who have possessed it in a high degree have ever become great, have ever largely influenced the affairs of the world. Look, for instance, at the Chinese and the Romans, the one a people destitute of self-reliance, the other largely endowed with it. The civilisation of China has been achieved for the people, the Romans made theirs for themselves; and so, while the one has left the world unaffected by its existence, the other has left an indelible mark, which time will never be able to efface. Self-reliance is therefore the condition of progress and of greatness; without it the individual ever remains a child, the nation continues in its early savagery, or, like the Chinese, having advanced as far as its governors and teachers, there remains, and advances no further.

To this quality of self-reliance we owe greatness on the part of the individual, and progress on the part of the race. Thousands of men are never anything more than children. They affirm or deny what their fathers affirmed or denied before them, their actions and their opinions are not the outgrowth of the man within, but the mere results of the external influences which have been brought to bear upon them. Fear, hope, prejudice, bigotry—anything but a well-governed reason, are the guides, and supply the motives of such men. But there are others who pass out of this state; and what is the process through which they pass? They begin to question and to doubt; to ask themselves earnestly whether or not they are justified in accepting the things which have been taught them as Truth. They throw off their implicit belief in the authority of their teachers, and recognise that God has given to each and every man, if he will but use it, the means and capacity of forming a judgment for himself. They thus begin to rely upon themselves instead of others; and out of this new-born self-reliance come well-grounded convictions; they are able now to give a reason for the faith that is in them. But more than that, there comes a power of self-help; no longer the slaves, the toys, or the catspaws of others, they act for themselves, and achieve things before quite impossible to them.

A similar progress is only possible by similar means on the part of humanity in the aggregate. In the early time superstition, which is mental slavery, is the governing principle, and ignorant fears, and equally ignorant hopes, supply the motives of men's actions. The rise out of such a state is alone possible by the growth of that self-reliance which enables men to look their fears and hopes full in the face, and form an independent judgment about the reasonableness thereof, and the validity of the grounds upon which they are based. Gradually, one by one, the old prejudices, the ancient bigotries, all that was evil in the early time of superstition, are eradicated from the minds of the few, who become the pioneers of a future progress hitherto impossible. Gradually, one by one, new truths are evolved, the sciences are born, knowledge takes the place of superstitious beliefs, and, self-reliant and self-helpful, the nation marches on to light and civilisation. All, therefore, that has been achieved in art and science, in the whole round of civilisation, in fact, we owe to the possession and exercise of this grand quality by the few great souls who have been leaders among men.

Yet it is this quality which the Priest ever makes war upon, There is

nothing so hateful to the priestly mind as self-reliance and a capacity for self-help. If we look for the fundamental characteristic of the priestly teachings and influences, wherever found—and alas! for man, they have been existent in all ages and nations—we find that it consists in a desire to lower man's estimate of his own powers, to paralyze the mental strength, and enslave the souls of men. Everywhere it has been the same; a priestly caste, or class, arrogating to itself peculiar wisdom and goodness, and holding itself capable of ministering to the ignorance, and the weakness of other men, and of granting them absolution from the consequences of their wickedness, has been the outcome of the various systems by which the religious needs of man have been made subservient to priestly ambition, and his religious emotions diverted from their proper course. Thus men have been taught to look to other influences, sacrificial offerings, priestly prayings, forms and ceremonies, mediatorial and vicarious sacrifices, anything, in fact, but to themselves for the means of escape from the hell they feared, or of gaining the heaven they hoped for. They have been taught, that of themselves they can do nothing, that their own efforts can avail them nothing; that they are by nature weak and sinful, and that nothing they can do can ever make them otherwise. It is from this desire, on the part of priests, to make men subservient to them, that our popular theology contains so many libels upon human nature; that the doctrine of human depravity, hereditary, and irremediable, except through implicit faith in the mysteries of which priests are the hierophants, is so constantly taught in our pulpits. Thus it is that religion has been divorced from morality, and repentance made to consist, not in earnest effort to redeem the evils of the past and to work out a better future, but in the mysterious influences of rites and ceremonies, or the undeserved mercy of a capricious Deity, propitiated by faith and prayer, or some other strange and unreasonable methods. The grand idea of man being his own Redeemer, the glorious truth that man must work out his own salvation, not by fear and trembling, but by earnest endeavours after truth and goodness, have ever been opposed by priestcraft; thus, self-reliance and self-help, which can alone come out of these convictions, have been abjured by men too frequently, and the progress otherwise possible to humanity, has been left unachieved.

This war upon the principles of self-reliance and self-help; this desire to lessen man in his own estimation; which we point to as the characteristics of priestcraft, are explained by the fact, that only by success in these respects can the Priest continue strong. Theologians trade upon the weakness and ignorance of mankind. They have ever done so, they do so still, and they will continue to do so, until men get to believe in themselves, dare to think for themselves. They trade, we say, on the weaknesses of men. It is natural to the mind of man, uninstructed by science, unstrengthened by earnest thought, to feel a fear and doubt of the future. Seizing this, and pretending a knowledge it has not, theology has erected theories of Heaven and Hell, a Devil, and eternal punishments; has undertaken to lay bare the eternal counsels of the Infinite; and to teach men that only those who listen to the teachings of the Churches, and take the means prescribed by them, may ever hope for Heaven—that all who do not this, must live in the constant fear of Hell. But, let none hope for Heaven who has it not within himself, let none stand in fear of Hell who has not created it for himself. There is no Devil but the one who exists in the fear and remorse of conscience arising out of evil done, and the dread of the just punishment which must come. Let no

man hope to escape this devil by any other means than that of living a new life, departing from the error of his ways, and working out a better future.

Man's nature has ever been abused by the Priest. Not alone have his weaknesses, fears, and hopes; but also his nobleness of feeling has been made to serve their purpose. Look through the past history of Christendom, and ask yourselves what is the meaning of those relics and pilgrimages which had so large a part in the religious developments of the Middle Ages. How was it men got to believe in the value of these things? The love for the great and the noble, that hero-worship which is natural to man, and forms one proof of the inherent nobility of human nature, lies at the bottom of these things. Why did people love those relics? why with reverent steps did they wend their way towards those sacred shrines, those holy places, but because these things were all connected in their minds with the great souls of the past, or those whom they had been taught to believe great? It is true, we, taking a wider and wiser view of their characters, may look with different eyes upon those saints; but justice to our fellow-men demands that we ever bear in mind, that they saw them only as great and noble men, and loved them accordingly. Progress in thought, arising in various ways, but all independent of the Churches, and generally achieved in spite of them, has to a great extent destroyed the belief in the religious value of relics and pilgrimages; but priestcraft is priestcraft still. The same abuse of the noble feelings in the minds of men is found operant in various ways in modern theological systems. Why, for instance, has the doctrine of the Trinity taken such firm hold on the minds of thousands, but because, recognising the truth and purity, the self-sacrifice, and nobleness of Jesus of Nazareth, men listen with a ready ear to the teaching that he was God Himself?

Thus, the weaknesses of humanity, whether base or noble—or rather, perhaps, we should say, the weaknesses arising out of the base or noble feelings of men—have been used by our theologians. But not the weakness only, but the ignorance, too, of man, has furnished a source of strength for theological theories and priestly influence. The obscure and the supernatural—those realms in which man's ignorance has had full scope—have thus ever been the vantage ground of the theologian. Ere yet science had thrown a light into so many dark corners, and had laid bare the sources of so much that was looked upon as supernatural, when so much was obscure which has now become plain, they were all-powerful in many regions, wherein the advancing intelligence of a scientific age threatens their speedy overthrow. Although much superstition, disgraceful to our time, still exists amongst us. Why, for example, is it that now, at recurring intervals, fast days, days of humiliation and prayer, are appointed? Why, when cholera scourges, or famine threatens, is Heaven besieged, and men taught that these things are needful to avert the evils? In this we see a relic of the old times, when men believed that such evils had a supernatural source, and that taught they could do would serve to cure; and so, in their weak and helpless ignorance, they followed the course pointed out by their theological teachers, who taught that only by propitiating the Deity, and praying for His assistance, could the evil be driven away. Aught the source of which is obscure and unknown, anything mysterious, has always been made to serve the theological purpose; and it is only when men have learnt to depend upon themselves, and dare to examine for themselves, that they cease to be the slaves of priestly systems—cease, in fact, to be superstitious, and are in a fair way to become religious.

JAS. L. GOODING.

NEWMAN STREET FREE CHURCH SUNDAY LECTURES.

BY P. W. PERFITT, PH. D.

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT.

(Concluded from p. 396.)

I REPUDIATE the Atonement theory in all its forms, and for many reasons, one of which is given briefly thus—that it is based upon a radical misconception of the nature of punishment, and its relation to the evil which has to be obliterated. In some strange way we have reached the conclusion, that death is an evil, that to die is to be irredeemably punished; and, consequently, that punishment in the form of putting to death, is the extremest we can conceive of, and apply in order to promote good, and to deter men from committing evil; it is said to be the worst which can be inflicted upon mortals. But how do we know this? May it not be that instead of death being a terrible curse it is a magnificent blessing, that instead of being an enemy from whom we should fly in terror, it is a friend we should joyfully embrace? When Socrates was closing his defence or address, after having been sentenced, he informed his judges that he was going to death—out into the world and life, they were to continue among their friends, whereas he was to pass down to the grave—but that which was the best situated, which was to enjoy the better condition, was unknown unto all save God. A wiser saying, in relation to life and death, has not yet been repeated unto mankind. He held that although they, by way of punishment, had sentenced him to be put to death, it was impossible for them to know which of the two, whether pleasure or pain would fall to his lot. So that what is intended as punishment may prove to be the reverse. And this is seen in the case of condemned criminals who are hanged unto death, by way of punishment. But who can trace the course of the spirit after it quits its hold of the clay? Who can enter into the other world or worlds so as to declare with certainty what is there to be done and endured? We know that if they are permitted to live, Remorse, like the gnawing serpent, will not permit them to rest, their consciences becoming their tormentors, will not allow them to be at peace in this world, and may it not be that instead of punishing we are doing them an act of kindness, by causing them to perish? He who declares that it is not so cannot furnish any evidence to justify his boldness, and he who upholds the contrary is in like case. But having assumed that they know all about it, having declared that they are perfectly certain, men proceed to argue that the death of Jesus was as the punishment of sin, and upon this is raised the vast superstructure of the Atonement theory. Let them deal with this matter in a wiser spirit, when, as the natural result, it will be discovered that until we know more than is now known of the future, we are not justified in pronouncing that the path which leads thereto is a great mass of evils, or in presuming it to be crowded with sources of agony. If death be a blessing, then the form in which it comes cannot change its nature, and if it be “the happy release,” which so many millions have declared, then we have no right to maintain that the death of Jesus was a real punishment.

And here, of course, we have to contend with the fallacious theory “that man dies,” in which a form of words came into use, unto which pertain no objective ideas. So far as the spirit is concerned we cannot speak of its death. When a man lies down to sleep, he may pass the night in a state of unconscious being, neither feeling nor dreaming of the life which is; and supposing the state to continue, in this we have embodied the idea of perfect death. But men are not prepared to accept that as the fact of the future; they cleave to the idea that although we may lose the body we preserve the spirit, that, as when in sleep, we dream, so in death shall the spirit really enjoy the liberty which now it only dreams. Thus they are unable to say that, in any practical sense, Jesus died. It was no loss to him to pass away. It would be considered absurd were we to say that a prince who had become a wandering mendicant, was punished by being compelled to go back again to his princely halls. How shall we say that he lost by being compelled to cast off the wretched garments of poverty, and to abandon the miserable fare of the

poorest? And if it be conceded, as the Orthodox demand, that we look upon Jesus as a Divine person, how can we call it a punishment, when he is called upon to cast off the human, so as once more to be only the Divine? Punishment it could not be, and to call it release from punishment is nearer the mark; but, of course, so contradictory are all the ideas in relation to this subject, that no language can be found which will fairly express them. There is a fundamental error which runs through the whole theory, and it is impossible to conceive of those things being objective facts which are premised. It is, however, enough to know that, even viewing Jesus as a man, it is impossible to say that his death was an evil, a loss, a source of pain, or, in any other form, a punishment. Until we know that the good lose by quitting this life, it is out of our power, with fairness, to argue that they are losers by the death through which they pass; and, viewing him in the light of a Divine Being, it is obvious that death unto him, being merely a release, could be no punishment.

Moreover, there is no possible connection between the death of one person and the conscience of another. Say, even, that death is the punishment which it has been imagined to be, still it is utterly impossible to comprehend how the dying of one person, or being, can remove the charge and consciousness of guilt from another. If a man has committed a murder, he alone must endure the pangs of a guilty conscience; punishment cannot be disassociated from himself and his own conscience, and were all who are now living in the world to die, their deaths could not change his frame of mind, neither would it serve to alter the relation in which he stands to his fellow-men. Can the man who is suffering under the pressure of pain and disease derive profit from another person taking medicine in his stead? When a leg is broken, can it be hoped that a cure will be effected, if instead of putting the splints upon the damaged limb, they are placed upon a sound one? And that which holds good in physics holds also in the world of intelligence and spiritual life. While the individual consciousness abides, the sense of joy or shame abides with it, and the possibility of some other consciousness bearing its burden, is to be stoutly denied. And even were it true that another person could take my sense of sin, to share it with me, it is none the less true that I should not get quit of it. Either I must bear for myself or there can be no punishment. The sense of sin cannot be transferred, and so also the sense of merit.

I deny, also, the primary assumption in this Atonement theory, which is, that it is a virtue in the innocent to bear the punishment of the guilty. Not that the theory of Jesus having willingly done so can be maintained. It is assumed that of his own free will he came to earth and died, the just for the unjust, the pure for the impure; but certainly, unless we cut a great deal out of the Gospels, this cannot be maintained. What was his prayer? "Let this cup pass from me!" Surely it is impossible to argue that, when to this was added the strong remark, "Not my will, but thine be done," he was simply doing what he wished, and had resolved upon doing. I am unable to understand the words in any other sense than that he who used them submitted to the Divine Will, and did not his own but the will of God.

But if Jesus had willed otherwise, had he resolved upon attempting to bear the sins of the guilty, I should not consider the action to be a proof of wise virtue. We do not destroy sin by destroying its consequences, we rather strengthen it. Unfortunately there are men who speak upon this subject, as if they believed that all God had to look to was, that for the measure of sin committed, a certain measure of suffering should be endured, and that utterly regardless by whom it was borne; but the marvel is that they could have so gravely mistaken the philosophy of His government, in associating such a scheme with justice. They say that men have sinned and deserve punishment. In that case it is a duty to punish them, but the pain must be regulated and measured by the wrong committed, as throughout nature we find to be the law of God. To punish those who have not sinned is evidently wrong, neither can their freedom of choice interfere with the matter to alter the complexion of the action. For instance, let us suppose ourselves to be in a court of criminal law, where a man is being tried for felony, he

is found guilty, and when the judge is about to pass sentence, a man rises in the court to solicit that he may be permitted to pay the penalty in undergoing the punishment. This man, on being questioned, turns out to be one of the best and purest-minded in the city—a man well known for his charity, probity, and sense of honour. The question being asked if there are any persons present who can speak against him, is answered in the negative, so that there is no doubt of his being the good and the upright man. I ask, can the judge pass the sentence upon him? Can he permit that honest man to be borne away in place of the felon, while the felon, released from punishment, is set free from danger and pain? If so, then this will be the real state of the case, that a wrong has been done in allowing punishment to be inflicted upon those who did not merit it, while an equal wrong will be done toward society in permitting the sinner to go free. And if the judge were to pretend to justify himself by arguing that the innocent man willingly offered himself, we should feel all the more annoyed at his conduct. As a judge, we demand that he shall administer justice—short of that, nothing will satisfy us; but inflicting punishment upon the guiltless, and permitting the guilty to escape, are clear violations of the law of right action. How, then, can we lay this wrong to the charge of God? Clearly this is what the Orthodox have argued. They declare that the innocent suffer for the guilty, and that through that suffering the guilty are released. God is represented as being content with this; or not merely content, He is glad of, as well as content with it. So that He is strictly identified with the villany. I repudiate the entire theory, as equally unjust toward God, and a violation of our common sense. There is no truth in it, for were it so, then all things would soon fall into confusion. And upon this point I speak absolutely, for it is impossible to recognise the common notion, that in matters pertaining to the Divine, we cannot know anything. Directly, we may not, but inferentially, we cannot avoid learning much. As we conclude that God cannot do evil, so we conclude, that as a part of that settled proposition, injustice, as we understand it, is involved. And if in future ages it be shown that we do not know what justice is, I shall find no difficulty in amending my proposition in the letter, for in the spirit it will need no change. There can be no question of the fact, that in the same sense in which we are spoken of as capable of comprehending the nature of sin, charity, &c., so are we able to comprehend injustice; thus, a mere change of terms will not alter the position of affairs. The facts are, that we are guilty, frequently guilty of doing such things as we ought not, and of not doing what we ought to do; if for this we deserve punishment, then must we bear it for ourselves without any escape. It cannot, without mockery of justice, be borne for us, and the more distinctly that fact is borne in mind, the less liable shall we be to do the unjust deeds. Men do not hesitate to contract debts which others are to pay. And if the penalty of all sins can be paid by third parties, the measure of sin will not be speedily reduced. If we lay to heart the fact of our own responsibility, it will greatly help in preserving us from such courses as bring shame upon ourselves, and pain upon others.



END OF VOLUME VI.

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